

NORTH WEST COASTAL TRAIL - CONCEPT FEASIBILITY STUDY



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for -
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Concept Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study assesses the potential for a North West Coastal Trail and provides recommendations for its future development and management. It was prepared for the North West Coastal Forum and funded by the North West Development Agency. This Executive Summary highlights key findings of the Study.

A. The Feasibility Assessments

The feasibility assessments included reviews of public policies, the environmental context, current paths, other routes and associated facilities, and potential user markets. These assessments indicate that -

- a. the concept of a Coastal Trail, from Chester to Carlisle, for multi-day, day and part-day walking and cycling, and, where feasible, riding and all-abilities use, is ambitious - but can bring a variety of benefits
- b. the Trail can help to achieve public policy agendas, such as sustainable travel, recreation and tourism, environmental and economic regeneration, and community health
- c. the landscapes, topography and natural, cultural and built heritage of the North West's coast and coastal settlements are major strengths of the proposed Trail. However, it will pass through extensive urban areas, including some poorer quality environments
- d. parts of the Trail will differ markedly from other coastal paths and are likely to appeal to different users than traditional long-distance walkers
- e. it is essential that the proposed Trail is marketed honestly and realistically, stressing its positive attributes (e.g. landscapes, birdlife, heritage, visitor attractions) and opportunities to discover and enjoy the North West's coast, coastal settlements and heritage, rather than promoting it primarily as an end-to-end walking or cycling route
- f. there is scope to adopt a 'green corridor' approach to enhancing the wider Trail corridor
- g. existing paths and cycle routes, information and other services provide a framework from which the Coastal Trail may be developed
- h. before the Trail is widely promoted, gaps in the continuity of existing paths and cycle routes, detours up rivers and around estuaries, and the variability and shortfalls in quality of path surfaces, visitor services, etc., require to be tackled
- i. there are few safe, off-road riding routes along much of the proposed Trail
- j. train, bus and some tram services can enable users to travel to/from the Trail, pass through urban areas and avoid long detours around estuaries, etc.
- k. national, regional and local trails will link to the Trail and enable circular walks or rides
- l. there is strong demand for coastal visits, including for walking and cycling. Such visitors contribute significantly to local economies
- m. market segments with strongest growth potential include recreational and holiday walking and cycling trips, club and group walking and cycling visits, educational visits and events
- n. sections of the Trail can cater for less mobile and disabled users and there is potential for walking and cycling links from, and to promote use by, disadvantaged communities.

These assessments demonstrate that -

- i. **there is substantial scope for the development and promotion of a North West Coast Discovery Trail from Chester to Carlisle**
- ii. **this Trail can build on, and enhance, the existing network of paths and cycle routes on the coast, link coastal settlements, cater for a variety of walking, cycling and, to a lesser extent, riding markets, and enable exploration, appreciation and enjoyment of the coastal landscapes, settlements and natural and cultural heritage, by residents, day visitors and tourists**
- iii. **the proposed Trail can bring a wide range of benefits to the North West, by contributing to leisure, tourism and economic growth, urban and rural regeneration, and community health and well-being - all in sustainable ways.**

Importantly, the Trail will comprise the type of regionally significant recreational and park resources being promoted for the North West and will provide access to, and through, site-specific regional parks, as are proposed for the Ribble Estuary and Mersey Waterfront.

B. Progressing the Development of the Coastal Trail

The Report highlights the tasks involved in developing, managing and marketing the proposed Trail, recommends organisational arrangements, and identifies potential funding sources, key steps in developing the Trail and means of generating support for the Trail. The recommendations include, in summary, -

- a. **partner organisations should agree a clear, overall aim for the Coastal Trail** - elements of such an aim are recommended in the Report
- b. **the Trail should be developed as a regional trail. Appropriate sections should be developed and promoted as National Cycle Network regional routes**
- c. **the Trail should be developed and promoted as the 'North West Coast Discovery Trail'** - with a more concise title and a logo and strap-line being developed to support this identity
- d. **a Trail development and management strategy should be prepared, as a priority**
- e. **partner organisations should be encouraged to 'sign up' to a Trail Partnership Agreement** - committing key partners to the Trail's aims and 'making it happen'
- f. **a North West Coast Discovery Trail Partnership should be established** - comprising the local authorities, other key funding organisations, and, possibly, the coastal and estuary partnerships. The Chairperson will act as a 'champion' for development of the Trail
- g. **a Trail Liaison Group should be formed** - as a wider forum for interested parties (e.g. user groups, communities, tourism businesses), which may meet 2- to 3-times each year
- h. **a Trail Officer and small Trail Management Unit should be appointed** - to plan, coordinate and facilitate the development, management and marketing of the Trail, service the above groups, and secure funding and other support
- i. **support of a key partner organisation should be sought to provide accommodation, administrative, financial and other services for the Trail Management Unit**
- j. **to capitalise on current funding opportunities (e.g. rural recovery funding), partner organisations should ensure that -**
 - **the Trail features in their policy agendas, plans and action programmes**
 - **they set aside funding to support external funding** - i.e. match funding

- **a funding strategy is prepared for the Coastal Trail**
- **a Coastal Trail Trust Fund is established** - to enable endowment funding, sponsorship and donations for longer-term management of the Trail
- k. **an Interim Steering Group should be set up, at the earliest opportunity** - comprising senior officers of the principal local authorities and regional agencies, to agree how best to progress initial tasks and achieve key milestones for developing and promoting the Trail.

Means of generating support for Trail development and management include -

- involving decision-makers, user groups and other organisations in the Trail Partnership and Liaison Group
- establishing a Trail Friends Group and identifying Trail 'champions'
- high profile events and media coverage
- publishing 'key stage' information leaflets and a newsletter
- establishing and maintaining a Trail Website
- a Trail logo competition and projects for schools
- involving communities and users as voluntary wardens, and in pathworks and guided walks.

NORTH WEST COASTAL TRAIL - CONCEPT FEASIBILITY STUDY

INDEX

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

Index	a
1. Introduction	
1.1 The Feasibility Study	1
1.2 Study Scope and Process	1
1.3 Study Report	1
1.4 Acknowledgements	2
2. The North West Coastal Trail Concept	
2.1 The Coastal Trail Concept	3
3. The Policy Context	
3.1 Review of Policies of Relevance to the Proposed Trail	5
3.2 National and Regional Policies	5
3.3 Structure and Local Plans and the Lake District National Park Plan	7
3.4 Local Transport Plans, Walking and Cycling Strategies and Future Rights of Way Improvement Plans	8
3.5 County- and Area-Wide Economic Development and Tourism Strategies	8
3.6 Countryside and Coastal Management Plans and Related Strategies	9
3.7 Conclusions and Recommendations on the 'Fit' between the Trail Concept and Wider Policy Agendas	10
4. Environmental Context, Paths and User Provision	
4.1 Assessment of the Potential Trail 'Product'	11
4.2 The Coastal Landscapes and Natural and Cultural Heritage	12
4.3 The Route, Paths and Related Infrastructure	14
4.4 Public Transport, Other User Services, Amenities and Attractions	18
5. Overview of Potential Trail User Markets	
5.1 Assessing Potential User Markets and Users' Requirements and Aspirations for the Proposed Trail	23
5.2 National and Regional Data for Walking, Cycling, Riding and Coastal Visits	23
5.3 Sub-Regional and Local Data on Walking, Cycling and Riding and Related Visits to the North West's Coast and Coastal Towns	26
5.4 Data on Longer Distance Paths and Cycle Routes and Their Use	28
5.5 Responses to the Survey of Potential User Groups	29
5.6 Principal User Market Segments for the Proposed Coastal Trail	31
5.7 Conclusions and Recommendations from the Review of Potential Markets for the Proposed Coastal Trail	34
6. Key Findings and Conclusions of the Feasibility Assessment for the Proposed Coastal Trail	
6.1 Key Findings Of The Feasibility Assessment	37
6.2 Principal Conclusions From The Feasibility Assessments	38
Trans Pennine Trail - illustrative example of current practice	39
South West Coast Path - illustrative example of current practice	40

PART B. PROGRESSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COASTAL TRAIL

7.	Organisational Options for Coastal Trail Development, Management and Marketing	
7.1	Review of Organisational Arrangements and Recommendations for the Future	41
7.2	Tasks Associated with Developing, Managing and Marketing the Proposed Trail	41
7.3	Current Arrangements for Route Development, Management and Marketing	41
7.4	Requirements and Recommendations for Effective Trail Management	42
	Pembrokeshire Coast Path - illustrative example of current practice	47
8.	Potential Funding Sources to Support Development and Management of the North West Coastal Trail	
8.1	Review of Funding Requirements and Potential Sources	49
8.2	Capital Funding Requirements and Potential Sources	49
8.3	Revenue Funding Requirements and Potential Sources	50
8.4	Funding Smaller-Scale and Community-Based Trail Projects and Programmes	51
8.5	Conclusions and Recommendations on Funding	52
9.	Progressing the Proposals and Building Support for the Trail	
9.1	'Milestones' and Key Tasks for Trail Development	53
9.2	Generating Support for the Trail and its Development	43

Figures

3.1	National and Regional Policies of Relevance to the North West Coastal Trail	6
4.1	Overview Assessment of the Current Paths Context, Provision and Management	11
5.1	Annual Visits to Selected Coastal Attractions in the North West	26
5.2	Use of Promenades and Selected Lancaster Cycle Routes	28
5.3	Walking - Principal Potential Market Segments of the Proposed Trail	33
5.4	Cycling - Principal Potential Market Segments of the Proposed Trail	34
5.5	Riding - Principal Potential Market Segments of the Proposed Trail	34
7.1	Examples of Trail Development, Management and Marketing Tasks	41
7.2	Illustrative Options for Organisational Structure for Developing and Managing the Proposed Trail	45
8.1	Examples of Running Costs of National Trails	50
8.2	Potential Funding Sources for Smaller and/or Community-Based Elements of the Proposed Trail	51
9.1	Key Milestones and Tasks Relating to Trail Development	53

Appendix

A.	Key Contacts	i
B.	Responses to Survey of Potential User Groups	ii

NORTH WEST COASTAL TRAIL - CONCEPT FEASIBILITY STUDY

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

- 1.1.1 The North West Coastal Forum has identified the potential for a coastal trail along the entire length of the North West Region's coast and has set up a Project Group to progress this initiative. The Project Group and partner organisations are committed to the concept, but appreciate that there are practical, resource and organisational issues associated with developing such an ambitious project. Consequently, they agreed the need for an independent feasibility study of the potential and practicality of the concept, its market potential, how it might be funded, and organisational options for its initial development stage and for the subsequent management of the Trail. Peter Scott Planning Services Ltd. was appointed to undertake a rapid assessment of the Trail concept and how it may be taken forward. The North West Development Agency funded this Study.

1.2 STUDY SCOPE AND PROCESS

- 1.2.1 Given the timescale (late-December 2002 to March 2003), the scale of the concept - i.e. potentially a walking, cycling and riding trail from Chester to Carlisle, the number and range of potential partner organisations and other interests, and the lack of comprehensive data on, for example, the route, user markets and development costs, this study is not comprehensive. Nevertheless, a wide range of investigations and consultations have provided valuable, but often indicative information from which key findings and recommendations have been developed.
- 1.2.2 Principal elements of this study have included -
- desk studies of reports, other documentation and Web-based information - including policy reports, plans and strategies, visitor market data, information on potential component routes (e.g. Cumbria Coastal Way, Wirral Way), coastal attractions and visitor services, and other published and unpublished material
 - interviews and other contacts with representatives of a wide range of organisations to gain data, advice and insights into their experience, aspirations and views on the Trail concept, the existing 'product' and its future development
 - a brief questionnaire survey of selected representatives of the main organisations representing walkers, cyclists and riders in the North West (e.g. Ramblers' Association, Long Distance Walkers' Association, Cyclists Touring Club, British Horse Society, Byways and Bridleways Trust)
 - rapid 'drive-through' and selective 'walk-over' assessments of the Trail corridor and characteristics of its landscapes, routes, attractions, visitor services, etc.
 - a Workshop with members of the Project Group and representatives of other organisations (e.g. countryside/access managers, recreational groups) to discuss an initial review of the key issues and opportunities and potential ways forward.

1.3 STUDY REPORT

- 1.3.1 This Report presents the assessments, findings and recommendations of the **feasibility study (Part A)**, and discusses and provides **recommendations on progressing the proposed Trail (Part B)**. In particular, the Report sets out -
- a brief outline of the North West Coastal Trail concept (section 2)

- the strategic and local policies context and an assessment of the 'fit between the proposed Trail and relevant policy areas (s. 3)
- assessments of the environmental context, paths provision and related services (s. 4)
- indicators of potential user markets and market requirements (s. 5)
- key findings and conclusions from the feasibility assessments (s. 6)
- organisational options for the development and on-going management of the Trail (s. 7)
- potential funding sources to enable development and management of the Trail and development of its user markets (s. 8)
- ways of building political and community support for the Trail proposals and progressing these (s. 9).

1.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 1.4.1 This study has benefited from the support, information and views of a wide range of representatives of organisations across the North West (Appendix A). The assistance of these individuals and organisations is gratefully acknowledged.

2. THE NORTH WEST COASTAL TRAIL CONCEPT

2.1 THE COASTAL TRAIL CONCEPT

2.1.1 The idea of a coastal trail along the North West's coast has been mooted for some time. This concept has been given momentum by the North West Coastal Forum, which has set up a Project Group to progress the development of the North West Coastal Trail. The coastal trail concept is an important example of the type of regionally-significant park and recreational resources being promoted as part of the economic and tourism development strategy for the North West.

2.1.2 Key principles and components of the concept envisage the Trail as -

- a. a **continuous route from Chester and the Dee Estuary to Carlisle and the Solway Estuary**
- b. comprising linked sections of **shared-use, parallel, or separate, walking, cycling and/or riding routes and route options**
- c. enabling **longer distance and multi-day walks, cycling trips or horse rides, and more local day/part-day trips** - by local and regional residents and visitors
- d. **linking to other regional and national trails** - for example, Hadrian's Wall Path, Coast to Coast Path, C2C Cycle Route, other NCN routes and the Trans Pennine Trail
- e. **linking to circular routes** - for use on foot, cycle or horseback, in the vicinity of key resorts and other settlements
- f. offering **public transport options, as parts of linear or circular trips** - e.g. a coastal walk with return journey by tram, bus or train to a car or hotel
- g. encouraging **use by local residents, day visitors and tourists**
- h. a **socially-inclusive route** - catering for families, elderly people, people with disabilities, and for those from disadvantaged communities, insofar as is practical
- i. a **'showcase' for the natural, cultural and built heritage** of the North West's coast and coastal settlements, through **interpretation of sites, features and 'stories' of interest**
- j. contributing to a **positive image of the North West**
- k. offering **opportunities for 'greening' the Trail corridor** - through environmental regeneration and enhancement projects
- l. contributing to the **regeneration of coastal resorts and market towns**
- m. providing a **regional park-type resource** - comprising a recreational 'corridor' along/in the vicinity of the coast and an important component of, and 'feeder' route into, the potential Mersey Waterfront and Ribble Estuary Regional Parks
- n. generating **income, employment and economic development and diversification opportunities** for the communities through which it passes
- o. promoting **healthy exercise** in attractive surroundings.

2.1.3 At this stage, **the North West Coastal Trail is a concept**. While some elements are in place - such as the Cumbria and Lancashire Coastal Ways, Wirral Way and related cycle routes, there are gaps, barriers and shortfalls in the quality and presentation of the route. So far, the **principal contributions to the promotion and planning of the overall Trail have been -**

- **unofficial guides to long distance coastal walking** - by authors acting on their own initiative
- **the scoping report - North West Coastal Trail: Summary of the Missing Links in the Golden Thread and the estimated costs to complete** (Morecambe Bay Partnership, 2002).

- 2.1.4 In the absence of a more definitive prospectus or development strategy for the proposed Coastal Trail, the consultant has had to make informed assumptions and draw on the scoping report, the aspirations and information conveyed by representatives of partner organisations, related information and his own knowledge of trail planning, development, management and good practice.

3. THE POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 REVIEW OF POLICIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE PROPOSED TRAIL

3.1.1 The consultant reviewed a wide range of policy documents, statutory plans, walking, cycling and tourism strategies, coast and countryside management plans, feasibility studies and other reports to -

- identify policies and proposals of relevance to the proposed Trail, or with related intentions - e.g. promoting sustainable travel, or the regeneration of coastal towns
- examine the potential contribution of the Trail to the objectives, policies and programmes of potential partner organisations.

3.1.2 The policy review was not comprehensive, but covered a range of documents identified with assistance for staff from partner organisations. In particular, it included a selection of -

- national and regional policies (s. 3.2)
- structure and local plans, and the Lake District National Park Management Plan (s. 3.3)
- local transport plans, walking and cycling strategies, and intentions to prepare rights of way improvement plans (s. 3.4)
- county- and area-wide economic development and tourism strategies (s. 3.5)
- countryside, coastal management and related strategies (s. 3.6).

From this assessment of the policy context, the consultant has prepared -

- conclusions and recommendations on the 'fit' between the Trail concept and wider policy agendas (s. 3.7).

3.2 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICIES

3.2.1 Figure 3.1 (overleaf) summarises many of the principal national and regional policies, which the proposed Trail may contribute towards achieving, or which may impinge on development of the Trail.

Figure 3.1 National and Regional Policies of Relevance to the North West Coastal Trail
(examples; not comprehensive list)

Policy Areas	Policy Intentions & Requirements	Documents
Countryside Recreation & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authorities should provide better facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and increase access and enjoyment of the countryside and coast • every town/city should have safe non-motorised routes - i.e. 'greenways' and quiet roads for access to the countryside by foot, or on a bicycle or horse • development plans should identify existing, and opportunities for new, cross-authority routes and should promote local routes • local authorities should provide safe walking, cycling and off-road riding routes • trails presenting and interpreting the region's cultural inheritance should be promoted • people should have attractive, targeted and well distributed information to help them know about, travel to, and gain access in the countryside, especially near where they live. 	<p><i>PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation</i> (ODPM, 2002)</p> <p><i>The England Rural Development Plan</i> (DEFRA, 2002)</p> <p><i>Draft Regional Planning Guidance for North West</i> (GONW, 2002)</p> <p><i>Our Countryside : The Future - A Fair Deal for Rural England</i>, (DETR/ MAFF, 2000)</p> <p><i>Towards tomorrow's countryside</i> (Countryside Agency, 2001)</p> <p><i>Countryside & Rights of Way Act, 2000</i></p> <p><i>Countryside Recreation - Enjoying the Living Countryside</i> (Countryside Commission, 1999)</p>
<i>continued below</i>		

Figure 3.1 National and Regional Policies of Relevance to the North West Coastal Trail
(continued)

Policy Areas	Policy Intentions & Requirements	Documents
Sustainable Tourism & Activity Tourism Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for innovative alternatives to visitors' use of cars, especially in sensitive areas (e.g. cycling & walking routes) recognition of the importance of, and opportunities for growth in, activity holidays, but need for further development of route networks and linked visitor accommodation and services investment in cycle routes and facilities, national trails, and electronic information to help develop green tourism NWDA support for sustainable tourism, especially in Cumbria, and including the coast around Whitehaven, Maryport and Barrow, North Lancs. and other special areas; including regional access networks and cycleways the regional tourism strategy should identify powerful themes and brands 	<p>Time for Action - A strategy for sustainable tourism in England (English Tourism Council, 2001)</p> <p><i>Working for the Countryside - A strategy for rural tourism in England 2001-2005</i> (Countryside Agency & ETC, 2001)</p> <p><i>England's North West - a strategy towards 2020</i> (NWDA, 2001)</p> <p><i>A Tourism Vision for englands-northwest</i> (NWDA, 2002)</p>
Sustainable Travel & Promoting Walking and Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> highway authorities should develop 'greenways' and 'quiet roads' as alternatives to car travel requirements for local authorities to produce local transport plans and set targets for cycling and walking national objectives include reducing reliance on cars, promoting alternative means of travel, including through cycleways, footpaths and encouraging 'green commuting' legal provisions for quiet lanes and rural speed restrictions national target to double cycle trips between 1996 and 2002, and again by 2012. local authorities should produce cycling strategies, increase access to amenities by cycle and promote safe links between towns and countryside walking to be encouraged and made easier, more pleasant and safer. Walking trips to increase by 1/3rd by 2008 	<p><i>Draft Regional Planning Guidance for North West</i> (GONW, 2002)</p> <p><i>Countryside Recreation - Enjoying the Living Countryside</i> (Countryside Commission, 1999)</p> <p><i>Road Traffic Reduction Act</i>, 1997</p> <p><i>Transport Act</i>, 2000</p> <p><i>Transport White Paper: A New Deal for Transport - Better for Everyone</i> (DETR, 1998)</p> <p>PPG13: <i>Transport</i> (DETR, 1994)</p> <p><i>National Cycling Strategy</i> (DoT, 1996)</p> <p><i>Encouraging Walking: advice to local authorities</i> (DETR, 2000)</p>
Economic Development & Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coasts and countryside offer opportunities for recreation and visitors can play important roles in regenerating and helping to diversify local economies national and regional policies promote growth of rural leisure/tourism visits, businesses, employment and spend tourism aims are to increase visits and spending, especially in Furness, West Cumbria and coastal resorts flagship regeneration projects include regional parks and regeneration of coastal resorts and market towns - many of which are on the route of the North West Coastal Trail 	<p><i>Draft Regional Planning Guidance for North West</i> (GONW, 2002)</p> <p><i>The England Rural Development Plan</i> (DEFRA, 2002)</p> <p><i>englandsnorthwest: rural renaissance: The Regional Recovery Plan</i> (NWDA, 2002)</p> <p><i>England's North West - a strategy towards 2020</i> (NWDA, 2001)</p> <p><i>Regional Economic Strategy Review</i> (NWDA, 2002)</p>
Social Inclusion, Access for All and Sport for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> programmes to reduce social exclusion are at heart of Government policy statutory requirements aim to ensure that disabled people have access to facilities & services local authorities and statutory agencies should consider sport and recreation activities positively in urban and countryside areas and plan for regional needs local authorities and others should consider needs of recreational cyclists and riders, including through off-road provision and adapting disused railway track, etc. everyone should have opportunities and encouragement to play, lead and manage sport; adequate land & water should be available for informal sport 	<p>PPG17: <i>Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation</i> (ODPM, 2002)</p> <p><i>Sign Up for Sport</i> (N. W. Council for Sport & Recreation, 1994)</p> <p><i>Into Wild Country</i> (N. W. Council for Sport & Recreation, 1992)</p> <p><i>Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal</i> (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998)</p> <p><i>A Sporting Future for All - The Government's Plan for Sport 2001</i> (DCMS, 2001)</p>
continued below		

Figure 3.1 National and Regional Policies of Relevance to the North West Coastal Trail
(continued)

Policy Areas	Policy Intentions & Requirements	Documents
Health and Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of active lifestyles, including walking and cycling, to stay healthy and reduce stress • it makes sense for government investment to promote a mass participation culture for health benefits, reducing crime, etc. - walking, cycling and running continue as sports and recreational activities beyond post-teenage years • walking and cycling are recognised as important ways of improving personal health and fitness • policies promote the development and promotion of health walks programmes 	<p><i>Our Healthier Nation: A Contract for Health</i> (DoH, 1998)</p> <p><i>Game Plan: a strategy for delivering the Government's sport and physical activity objectives</i> - Strategy Unit 2003</p> <p><i>Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation</i> (DoH, 1999)</p> <p><i>Encouraging Walking</i> (see above)</p> <p><i>Walking the way to health</i>, (Countryside Agency: various)</p>

3.3 STRUCTURE AND LOCAL PLANS AND THE LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK PLAN

3.3.1 While the respective **structure plans** may promote policies relating to, for example, tourism and other economic development, integrated and sustainable transport, environment conservation and the coast, they do not refer to the North West Coastal Trail. Similarly, few local plans or unitary development plans identify or promote policies which specifically support the proposed Trail. However, several **unitary and local plans** contain policies and proposals relating to component routes - e.g. Cumbria and Lancashire Coastal Ways. Examples of relevant documents and policies are -

- **Lancaster District Local Plan - Pre-Adoption Composite Edition** (Lancaster City Council, 2002) - the City Council supports promotion of the Lancashire Coastal Way and intends to improve the appearance and safety of this and related routes, including Lune Riverside Park and Morecambe and Heysham seafronts. Also, the Council is committed to improving cycling facilities on Morecambe seafront. **Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 13: Lancaster District Cycling Strategy** (LCC, 2002) includes the objective ... *to encourage recreational cycling and ... deliver 20km of new cycle-way by 2010*. The Strategy proposes a review of cycling restrictions on Morecambe Promenade, investigation of links to Heysham, and upgrading the Lancaster Canal to enable multi-use
- **Sefton Unitary Development Plan - First Deposit Draft** (Sefton MBC, 2002) - this recognises the Sefton coast as a regional recreation resource and identifies *strategic paths for countryside recreation* - i.e. footpaths and cycling routes linking urban areas and the coast, including the Coastal Way, Trans-Pennine Trail and links to strategic cycle or walking routes in West Lancs., Liverpool and Knowsley.
- **Unitary Development Plan for the Wirral - Adopted February 2000** (Wirral MBC, 2000) - the UDP indicates that Wirral MBC has a long standing objective to complete ... *a continuous coastal route for pedestrians and cyclists. Promotion of access to the coast for tourism and informal recreation is seen as a high priority...*

3.3.2 The **Lake District National Park Management Plan** (Lake District NPA, 1999) indicates that, as an exception to policies of dispersing access over the existing path network and open access areas, the National Park Authority is prepared to assist the development and management of the Cumbria Coastal Way as a means of securing links in an otherwise discontinuous network to enable longer distance walking.

3.4 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS AND WALKING AND CYCLING STRATEGIES AND FUTURE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

3.4.1 Local transport plans are playing increasingly important roles in encouraging non-motorised travel - especially walking and cycling, and are backed with significant investment through the Highways Agency's and highway authorities' budgets. In addition, local highway authorities have been given the duty of preparing rights of way improvement plans [*The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Commencement No. 2 Order)*, 2002, DEFRA, 2002]. These plans will be incorporated into the local transport planning process from 2005 and this is likely to encourage greater investment in rights of way networks and strategic routes. Also, local authorities are preparing walking and cycling strategies, but few have developed significant policies relating to horse riding, other than general encouragement.

3.4.2 Examples of local transport plan and walking and cycling strategy contents of relevance to the proposed Coastal Trail are -

- **Local Transport Plan - Cumbria** (Cumbria C.C., 2002) - targets are to increase cycling trips to 5% of all trips (from 2-3% in 2002) and walking trips to 20% by end of 2006. Objectives for cycling include creating and maintaining a comprehensive, safe cycle network with dedicated cycle paths. Proposals include the extension of cycle routes in Barrow, the Whitehaven to Workington cycle route, and Furness greenways - including the Walney Island Path, and completing routes between Workington, Maryport and Sillioth, between Egremont and Seascale, and links to St. Bees, Workington Harbour, etc.. Also, the Plan aims to create and maintain a comprehensive, safe walking network and the Council will consider providing tracks for riding alongside off-road routes for walkers and cyclists
- **Lancashire Cycling Action & Development Plan: Second Draft** (Lancashire C.C., 2002) seeks to double cycle use by 2006 and quadruple it by 2116. The Plan recognises a need to improve leisure cycling facilities, cycle access into the countryside and the potential for cycling tourism
- **Cheshire's Cycling Strategy** (Cheshire C.C. & Travelwise, undated) states that the County Council will develop cycling to meet leisure, recreation and tourism needs, and help to identify off-road cycle routes, visitor services and information provision for cyclists. Proposals include promoting the development of cycle hire services, cycling breaks and holidays, secure cycle parking at countryside facilities, and a Millennium cycle route using Wirral Country Park
- **Feet First - A Walking Strategy for Cheshire** (Cheshire County Council & Travelwise, undated) - this indicates intentions to promote access to the countryside through the rights of way network and development of countywide footpath networks, using canals, quiet lanes and green corridors
- **Merseyside Walking Strategy** (Merseyside Authorities & Merseytravel, undated) - headline targets are to increase modal share of pedestrian journeys to 30% by 2006, and by 35% by 2011 (from 25% in 2001), including increasing pedestrian social and recreational trips by 2% by 2006, and by 4% by 2010.

3.5 COUNTY- AND AREA-WIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGIES

3.5.1 Recognition of the scope for walking and cycling development and visits to contribute towards urban regeneration, rural development and sustainable coastal and rural tourism in the North West - especially in the aftermath of Foot-and-Mouth disease - is reflected in several county and area strategies. For example -

- **Cumbria Rural Action Zone - 'Next Steps' Strategy** (Cumbria RAZ Steering Group, 2001) includes as a strategic aim ... *increasing opportunities for all who visit Cumbria to get enjoyment from the countryside, together with its related towns and villages, through improved access and facilities.*

Proposals in the 'Next Steps' Strategy include creating an integrated walking and cycling network and promoting Web-based information. Project ideas submitted for internal consideration under this Strategy (Cumbria C.C. memo, 9/2002) have included ... *Relaunching the Cumbria Coastal Way: reassessing the current route, upgrading the physical infrastructure and signing.*

- **Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan** (Lancashire Rural Partnership, 2002) identifies the need to create rural cycling and walking tourism products and packages, and opportunities to improve sustainable access through strategic trails
- **Mersey Waterfront - Commencement Business Plan, April 2002** (Mersey Partnership, 2002) indicates that most visits to the coast are for walking, but highlights poor access, lack of cleanliness and safety as issues. It sets out the strategic objective ... *to improve the coastal environment, its sustainable tourism product, its access, its interpretation and education roles for residents and visitors.* Proposals for the Waterfront include local trails, country park development and enhancements, visitor centres, public art, landscaping and marketing
- **Regional Tourism Strategy for Cumbria** (Cumbria Tourist Board, 1998) states that priority is to be given to developing and marketing tourism outside the Lake District, including in Carlisle, along Hadrian's Wall, in West Cumbria, and on the Furness and Cartmel Peninsulas. Improvements are required to accommodation and access and the strategy promotes the development of farm accommodation, cycle-based tourism - including the Cumbria Cycle Way and circular cycle routes, cycle-friendly roads and accommodation, and cycle carriage on buses and trains
- **Cheshire Sustainable Tourism Strategy** (Cheshire C.C., 1996) states as a principal aim ... *To encourage recreational activity as a special way of exploring Cheshire's countryside and heritage without depending on a car.* It promotes the development of, and improvements to, infrastructure for urban and rural walking
- **Tourism Towards 2005 - Cheshire tourism strategy** (Cheshire Economic Alliance, 2001) takes forward the intentions of the previous report and sets out actions, including strengthening the product brands - *Cheshire Walks* and *Cheshire Cycling*, by ensuring that each is ... *managed by a partnership with a remit, resources, business plan and timeframe.* These may be developed through quiet lanes and off-road cycling initiatives, and ensuring that the tourism interests are taken into account in Rights of Way Improvement Plans and their implementation.

3.6 COUNTRYSIDE, COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND RELATED STRATEGIES

3.6.1 In recent decades, management strategies have been prepared for the countryside, coast, countryside recreation and related aspects of the North West. Examples are -

- **Solway AONB Management Plan - Pre-Public Consultation Draft** (Solway AONB Management Team, 2003) - this recognises that the AONB has much to offer, but visitor products need packaging and ... *to be given polish ...*, and much of the infrastructure (e.g. access, car parks, interpretation) is *low-grade*. The key to enhancing the Solway AONB is indicated as ... *better access, whether it is physical access or intellectual access to information.*

The **Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Management Plan** (Solway Rural Initiative Limited, 1998) included the intention ... *to prepare a study of the Cumbria Coastal Way route, if necessary recommending alternative route alignments, surfacing, signing etc.* Also, it promoted green tourism, circular footpaths inland from the coast, and the development of camping barns, farm accommodation and routes for longer walking, cycling and riding tours

- **Interpretation & Marketing Strategy for Morecambe Bay: Strategic review and proposals** (James Carter & David Masters, 2002) - following consultations by the Morecambe Bay Partnership, the consultants set out a strategic framework for interpretation based on the key theme ... *Morecambe Bay is a unique landscape, constantly changed by the ebb and flow of the tide*
- **Mersey Estuary Management Plan** (University of Liverpool, 1995) -this includes the strategic objectives ... *to realise the potential of the Estuary as a focus for tourism ... and ... to promote the regeneration of the Estuary Zone ... including, where appropriate, through extending public access to the shores of the Estuary.* The plan recognises previous initiatives to provide riverside and estuary walking routes, such as the Mersey Way, Sefton Coast Path and Wirral Coast Path, and the need to fill gaps in these routes and create wider access for walking, cycling and riding. Policies state that ...*Advantage should be taken of any opportunities, which offer to extend the network of paths leading to and along the shores of the Estuary ... and ...The public should be encouraged to use the coastal paths and riverside walkways ... by improving their accessibility, their design and the facilities which make them user-friendly*
- **Dee Estuary Strategy** (Dee Estuary Strategy Advisory Group, 1996) - this sets out as a guiding principle ... *local authorities and other agencies should improve access, the quality of information and facilities at suitable locations around the DESZ (Dee Estuary Strategy Zone) for sport, recreation and tourism, which minimise any adverse impacts on the environment and other interests.*

3.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE 'FIT' BETWEEN THE TRAIL CONCEPT AND WIDER POLICY AGENDAS

- 3.7.1 **The proposed Coastal Trail has potential to assist the achievement of a wide range of policy objectives** - including policies relating to countryside recreation and access, environmental regeneration, social and economic development, sustainable transport, green tourism, social inclusion and health. However, while many policies and programmes relate to intentions and actions, which may contribute to the development and promotion of the proposed Trail, **few plans and strategies specifically identify or promote the development of the North West Coastal Trail.**

- 3.7.2 ***It is recommended that partner organisations should ensure that policies and proposals relating to the Coastal Trail are clearly identified in appropriate policy documents and action programmes.*** Where appropriate, Trail proposals and related development and maintenance commitments should be referred to in -

- structure and local plans and local transport plans
- AONB, estuary and other countryside and coastal management plans
- economic development, rural regeneration and tourism strategies.

The inclusion of policies and proposals relating to the Coastal Trail in such documents will reinforce partners' commitments towards progressing the Trail and help to ensure that these are fully considered in partners' investment programmes.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT, PATHS AND USER PROVISION

4.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TRAIL 'PRODUCT'

4.1.1 This assessment of the existing context and paths and services, which may contribute to the potential Trail 'product', focuses on -

- **the coastal landscapes and natural and cultural heritage** - which comprise much of the environmental and cultural context of the proposed Trail (s. 4.2)
- **the route, paths and related infrastructure** - especially walking, cycling and riding paths, which may comprise the proposed Trail, and other strategic routes and shorter-distance, promoted route networks (s. 4.3)
- **public transport and other user services, amenities and attractions** - including visitor information, interpretive provision and accommodation (s. 4.4).

4.1.2 The principal strengths, shortfalls and opportunities relating to the above aspects are highlighted in the summary table overleaf (Figure 4.1) and are discussed below. The assessments are drawn from publications, including the Morecambe Bay Partnership's scoping study, discussions with representatives of potential Trail partner organisations and a brief questionnaire survey of potential user groups. Should the Trail proposals proceed, then a more detailed audit of existing paths and routes will be required to ascertain route options and required improvements to paths, facilities and services.

4.2 THE COASTAL LANDSCAPES AND NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

4.2.1 The scenery, topography and natural and cultural heritage of the proposed Coastal Trail is unique and contrasts with other coastal paths, such as the South West Coast Path, Pembrokeshire Coast Path and Cleveland Way. **Key attributes include** -

- i. the variety of landward and seaward views and sky-scapes** - in particular, the views across bays and estuaries and to the Isle of Man, and the variety of 'natural' and semi-urban landscapes and town-/city-scapes, contrast with the landscapes of other coastal paths, which are of high quality, but often offer less variety and their views are predominantly out to open sea, or along the coast
- ii. relatively flat topography** - which contrasts markedly with sections of several other coast paths, which are more undulating - e.g. over cliffs and headlands and crossing steep valleys. The lack of gradients on much of the proposed Trail lends itself to marketing to a wider range of walkers and cyclists, including less fit and disabled users - insofar as local conditions permit
- iii. wealth of natural and cultural heritage features and associated 'stories' and interpretive provision** - all coastal paths have important and interesting habitats, wildlife and social histories. However, the proposed Trail offers not only very varied and interesting habitats (e.g. mudflats, mires, dunes, coastal farmland, woodlands) and flora, bird-life and other wildlife (e.g. sea/migratory birds, marine mammals, rock-pool/mudflat species), but a rich social history and built heritage - reflecting, different periods of settlement (e.g. Roman settlements, growth of Liverpool, Victorian resorts), the maritime trading, fishing and ship-building heritage, ecclesiastical history and chemical, tourism, entertainment and energy industries.

The proposed Trail and the many interpretive facilities and centres (e.g. interpretive leaflets, display-boards, guidebooks, museums, visitor centres, guided walks) offer immense opportunities to stimulate Trail users' and local communities' interests and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage and for more formal education opportunities (e.g. school and college trips)

Figure 4.1 Overview Assessment of the Current Paths Context, Provision and Management

	Strengths	Weaknesses/Threats	Opportunities
A. Landscapes and Natural and Cultural Heritage			
landscapes (including townscapes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landscapes of outstanding scenic quality variety of coastal landscapes changing landscapes (with tides, weather, etc.) attractive villages and rural/resort unique town-/city-scapes (e.g. 3 Graces) topography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> areas of dereliction (e.g. docks) heavily urbanised/industrial landscapes natural hazards (e.g. tides, mudflats) lack of hills - desired by some walkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scenic qualities and attractive townscapes as marketing asset 'green corridor' approach to Trail will contribute to wider enhancement & regeneration objectives further, planned interpretation of landscapes relatively flat topography is marketing asset for less fit users
natural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> variety of habitats (e.g. dunes, mires, mudflats) variety of wildlife - esp. coastal birds range of sites/centres interpreting natural history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coastal habitats/species vulnerable to access pressures potential/current duplication of some stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> natural heritage (esp. coastal birds) as marketing asset - general visitors + specialist groups (e.g. educational groups, bird watchers) further, planned interpretation of natural heritage
cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> history of settlement, activity and industry (e.g. maritime, tourism, music & energy industries) sites/structures of interest (e.g. Roman and ecclesiastical sites, castles, Albert Docks) museums/centres/sites interpreting heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural sites which may be vulnerable to access pressures potential/current duplication of some stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural heritage, including historic towns and settlements, as marketing asset - general visitors + specialist groups (e.g. educational groups) further, planned interpretation of cultural heritage
B. Paths and Other Routes			
walking routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strategic paths already exist along much of coast (e.g. Cumbria Coastal Way, Wirral Way) important links to other national/regional trails local path networks and circular routes easy walking on many sections (flat, hard paths) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> missing connections in existing paths long trips up/around some rivers & estuaries shortfalls in path quality (e.g. poor surfaces) hazardous sections on/besides roads sections with poor signing and route definition lack of regular/sustained maintenance specific landowners object to access over land sections of path exposed and prone to erosion parts with difficult/tiring walking (mud, dunes, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop/market as continuous walking route upgrade/maintain route to agreed standards path creation/up-grading as part of other initiatives (e.g. Mersey Waterfront) creative means of filling gaps and avoiding detours (e.g. public transport links, railway viaducts) market route + strategic links + local circular walks
cycle routes <i>continued overleaf</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strategic cycle routes on much of coast (e.g. Cumbria Coastal Way, Wirral Way) important links to other cycle routes, including National Cycle network on-going development/improvements to network fairly flat topography suits range of cyclists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gaps in/between some cycle routes extensive sections on busy/hazardous roads long trips up/around some rivers & estuaries sections of cycle routes poorly signed/maintained sections of cycle routes exposed to winds/tides conflict with walkers on sections (e.g. promenades) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop/market as continuous cycling route upgrade/maintain route to agreed standards cycle route creation/up-grading as part of other initiatives (e.g. Mersey Waterfront) creative means of filling gaps and avoiding detours (e.g. public transport links, railway viaducts) market Trail, with strategic links and circular walks

Figure 4.1 Overview Assessment of the Current Paths Context, Provision and Management (continued)

	Strengths	Weaknesses/Threats	Opportunities
B. Paths and Other Routes (continued)			
riding routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision for riding on some cycle paths, promenades, other routes and beaches coast is attractive for riding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> few, mostly short, sections of coastal riding routes difficult to create continuous off-road riding routes many sections of walking/cycling routes not suited to multi-use, including riding means of 'bridging' estuaries, etc. not for horses landowners may be adverse to riding routes sections of coastal paths vulnerable to erosion, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide sections of multi-use routes, with riding, subject to detailed feasibility assessments provide local riding circular trails, etc.
use of route by disabled and less mobile persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> many current/potential sections of route suitable for use by disabled/less mobile people (e.g. promenades, sections with short distances between settlements & services) much of route is accessible by public transport topography and hard surfaces suits less able & users of wheelchairs, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sections of route (esp. rural areas) unsuitable for use by disabled/less able people (e.g. dunes, shingle, hazardous roads/crossings, poor surfaces) no information for disabled/less able (e.g. distances, gradients, accessible accommodation and services) potential conflicts with other users (e.g. cyclists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide/promote accessible sections of Trail prepare/adopt accessibility guidelines for Trail (e.g. accessible signing, provision of seats) provide route and services information for disabled
C. Public Transport and Other Path-related Visitor Services			
public transport services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> train/bus services to/along much of coast provide access to/from coast enabling day/multi-day trips trains/buses/trams enable avoidance of long detours around estuaries + urban sections, which are less attractive for walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sections of coast with less convenient access (e.g. North Solway) transport operators' limitations on bike carriage - especially on local trains/buses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> further opportunities to market train linked day/multi-day walks on coast encourage train/bus operators to be more cycle-friendly (e.g. LTP programmes)
visitor/user information and interpretive provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> range of guidebooks, leaflets, Web-sites, mapboards, etc. on section of route signing and waymarking of sections of route interpretive boards, leaflets, visitor centres and interpretation of features and 'stories' of interest initiatives to plan and coordinate some information and interpretive provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information is fragmented and provided by wide range of suppliers some leaflets/other info. are out-of-print or dated many sections have no signing, or the construction/content of the information and interpretation is poor quality, has been vandalised, or lacks maintenance duplication and overlaps in interpretation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop coordinated approach to published and Web information, its availability and promotion audit and ensure adequate signing and waymarking to agreed standards, including common identity
user accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> range of accommodation along coast at most resorts and farm-other rural accommodation visitor accommodation grading provides some quality assurance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of low cost, backpackers accommodation + some gaps in accommodation on coast quality still an issue at some accommodation not all accommodation is walker-/cyclist-friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage and promote walkers-/cyclists-friendly accommodation encourage rural diversification e.g. bunkbarns promote accommodation through guide, etc.
visitor services, amenities and attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> range of commercial visitor services along route (e.g. cafes, restaurants, cycle shops) provision of toilets, picnic areas, seats and other amenities (especially in resorts & country parks) many large-scale commercial attractions and smaller informal attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gaps in services and amenities - especially in more remote areas, out-of-season and mid-week varied quality of services and amenities few specialist services (e.g. cycle hire, walking holidays) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote new /grow enterprises linked to route - especially specialist activity holiday operators promote local businesses/attractions through Trail guide, etc.

4.2.2 From contrary viewpoints, there can be little doubt that **some potential users - especially U.K. and overseas longer-distance trail walkers - may be deterred from using the proposed Trail, or specific sections** (e.g. Merseyside) **due to -**

- a. **the relatively flat topography and lack of more challenging countryside** (e.g. hills and mountains)
- b. **perceptions and the reality of some fairly lengthy sections of the route through urbanised and industrialised areas, including areas of dereliction and poorer quality townscapes and landscapes**
- c. **the commercialism and character of resorts, such as Blackpool and Morecambe** - which are contrary to all that some users' value during a recreational walk or cycle ride (e.g. quiet, solitude, nature, lack of commercialism); albeit, that these sections of the Trail may be passed through on public transport.

These points of view were emphasised by respondents to the questionnaire survey of representatives of walkers', cyclists and riders' groups (Appendix B).

4.2.3 As the review of policies shows (section 3), the Trail proposals are complementary to policies for green tourism - based on the landscapes and natural and cultural assets of the North West's coast, and which can contribute to environmental and economic regeneration. In particular, ***it is recommended that -***

- i. ***advantage be taken of the special landscape and natural and cultural heritage qualities of the North West coast and coastal settlements in marketing the proposed Trail***
- ii. ***the proposed Trail be promoted in an honest and realistic manner, highlighting its coastal and urban assets and heritage, but not portraying it as the equivalent of other coastal paths*** - which offer predominantly 'natural' landscapes and have much less urbanisation, industrialisation and commercialism
- iii. ***the scope for the proposed Trail to be promoted as a 'showcase' for the North West's landscapes and natural and cultural heritage, and as an opportunity for the Region's residents, visitors and students to gain insights and understanding of these aspects, be maximised through 'branding' the proposed Trail as the North West Coast Discovery Trail***
- iv. ***a 'green corridor' approach be adopted in the development and management of the proposed Trail, with the intention of enhancing the Trail and the wider corridor through which it passes*** - thus, programmes for developing the Trail should not just focus on improving path surfaces and infrastructure, but should take a wider approach to enhancing the Trail corridor. This may be achieved through removing litter, fly-tipped materials and graffiti, and undertaking landscape and townscape improvements alongside the route.

4.3 THE ROUTES, PATHS AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE

4.3.1 As explained in section 2, the Coastal Trail concept envisages a multi-modal route - e.g. walking, cycling and riding route, with provision for disabled people - insofar as practical, and public transport options for access to/along The Trail. Provision for these user groups may comprise sections of shared-use paths, or separate paths for different combinations of users (e.g. walkers and cyclists, riders and walkers), in the same coastal corridor. The following section provides a brief assessment of current -

- a. **walking routes**
- b. **cycle routes**
- c. **riding routes**
- d. **potential use of paths by disabled and less mobile persons.**

Particular attention is given to the continuity, condition and signing of component paths.

a. Walking Routes

- 4.3.2 Not surprisingly, there is more provision for walking on the North West's coast than for other forms of non-motorised travel and recreation. This varies from urban and rural footways and resort promenades, to minor roads, farm roads, surfaced/unsurfaced and signed/unsigned rights of way, permissive paths and desire lines - with the latter categories more common in Cumbria and around Morecambe Bay.
- 4.3.3 **Strengths of current paths provision along the proposed Trail corridor include -**
- i. some form of path, footway or road available for walking over almost the entire length of the proposed Trail** - from Chester to Carlisle
 - ii. sections of the proposed Trail corridor comprising well-established or more recently developed promoted paths** - from the Wirral Shore Way and Wirral Way in the south, to the Cumbrian Coastal Way and Hadrian's Wall Path in the north
 - iii. variety of walking experience** - from promenade walking (e.g. Wirral, Fylde) to 'wild coast' walking (Morecambe Bay, West Cumbria, Solway), including the unique Cross-Bay walk across Morecambe Bay
 - iv. much of the paths provision is relatively flat and offers fairly easy walking** - often on sealed or consolidated surfaces (e.g. footways, minor roads, farm tracks)
 - v. strategic, often high profile, paths linking to the proposed Trail and to wider regional and national trail networks** - these can provide important 'feeder' routes to the Trail (e.g. Hadrian's Wall Path, Trans-Pennine Trail, Coast to Coast Path) and/or opportunities for longer-distance circular walks (e.g. around the Wirral and the Mersey Estuary, Cumbrian circuit on Cumbria Coastal Way and Cumbria Way)
 - vi. short- to medium-distance promoted paths** (e.g. Smugglers Route, Lunesdale Walk), **which offer local walks and scope for exploration, as part of the Trail 'experience' and contribute to local economic and tourism development.**
- 4.3.4 Despite these positive attributes, **there are many shortfalls in walking provision along the proposed Trail corridor; in particular -**
- a. gaps in sections of the route and long detours due to lack of river or estuary crossings** - these issues are exacerbated by difficulties and potential costs of crossing larger rivers and estuaries (e.g. 'hanging' pedestrian/cycle bridges on railway bridges), some landowners (e.g. Preston-Freckleton, Pilling Embankment) and communities resisting additional public access, and environmentally sensitive sections of coast. The additional walking, for example, around the Morecambe Bay estuaries and River Wyre (in winter) may detract from the attraction of the proposed Trail for more dedicated long-distance walkers
 - b. poor quality sections of current paths, including promoted routes** - including parts of the Cumbria and Lancashire Coastal Ways. This is often symptomatic of inadequate funding and staffing for path monitoring and maintenance, and includes waterlogged, potholed and litter-strewn surfaces, eroded paths on dunes, damaged signs, etc.
 - c. sections of path where walking is less comfortable and/or more tiring** - including extensive lengths of tarmac walking (e.g. Wirral, Sefton, Fylde) and sections of paths or desire lines on shingle or dunes (e.g. West Cumbria)
 - d. potentially hazardous sections of path or roads** - including sections of footway along busy main roads (e.g. A595 near Greenodd, A590 on Furness Peninsula), and paths/roads where high tides can pose hazards (e.g. Solway Estuary, south of Aldingham). Importantly, also, some paths in urban areas are perceived as hazardous by some walkers from traffic and/or personal security viewpoints.

b. cycling routes

- 4.3.5 As with walking provision, there is a very varied range of cycling provision in the vicinity of the North West's coast - including national and regional cycle routes (parts of the National Cycle Network), and opportunities for cycling on main roads, minor roads, bridleways, dedicated cycle paths, other shared use paths and promenades. This assessment is based on a review of promoted routes (i.e. routes with leaflets and signing) and information provided by cycling/countryside officers and cyclists' groups.
- 4.3.6 **Many of the strengths of current cycling provision are similar to those for walking routes, including -**
- i. **sections of the coastal corridor have promoted cycle routes** - for example, coastal sections of the Cumbria Cycle Way, Glasson-Lancaster-Morecambe Cycle Route, Signals and Saltmarsh Cycle Ride (Cheshire)
 - ii. **variety of cycling experience** - including on off-road and minor road routes, promenades, etc., with varied coastal scenery and historic towns and villages
 - iii. **much of the coastal corridor provides flat, relatively easy cycling**
 - iv. **sections of the National Cycle Network and other strategic routes 'feed' into the proposed Coastal Trail and offer scope for longer-distance circuits** - e.g. Trans Pennine Trail, NCN 6 London-Carlisle, C2C Cycle Route
 - v. **short/medium-distance linear and circular paths enable local rides and exploration** - such as the Preston and South Ribble Cycle Routes and Merseyrail's *Rideabout* Cycle Trails.
- 4.3.7 **Shortfalls in provision for recreational and other cycling are more substantial than for walking.** These include -
- a. **sections of the coastal corridor with no specific provision for cycling and where cyclists need to use busy, often hazardous roads** - for example, through parts of Liverpool, Lytham and Blackpool, and main road sections around Morecambe Bay and, especially, the Furness Peninsula (some current improvements through the Furness Greenways initiative)
 - b. **sections of NCN and other promoted cycle routes are some distance from the coast and will not contribute to the proposed Coastal Trail** - for example, the Wirral Cycle Route from Parkgate to New Brighton and proposed NCN 62 from Southport to Preston
 - c. **long detours around some river and estuaries** - especially on Morecambe Bay
 - d. **poor quality sections of promoted and other cycle paths** - for example, inadequate maintenance of the Cumbria Cycle Way
 - e. **locations where cyclists are given 'mixed messages' as to whether cycling is available and welcomed and potential conflicts with walkers** - for example on Morecambe Promenade and other shared use footways
 - f. **sections of minor roads or cycle paths, which are uncomfortable and potentially hazardous for cyclists, due to exposure to high tides and/or high winds** - e.g. coast road along the Solway Estuary.

c. riding routes

- 4.3.8 While focussing particularly on walking and cycling, the assessments considered riding provision and identified major shortfalls, as indicated below. **Strengths of the coastal corridor for riding include -**
- a. **riding opportunities on minor roads, bridleways and byways, cycle paths** (where riding is permitted), **and on the shore** - e.g. riding opportunities on the

Crook O'Lune Cycleway between Glasson Dock and Marsh Point at Lancaster, and from Haysham to Morecambe

b. links to the coast on multi-use routes - such as the Trans Pennine Trail

c. attractive scenery and conditions for riding - especially on beaches.

3.3.9 Shortfalls in riding provision and opportunities outweigh the positive attributes

i. lack of continuous or promoted riding routes on the North West's Coast

ii. many cycle routes and related provision are not available to riders (e.g. Lancaster's Millennium Bridge), **or are unsuitable due to traffic hazards**

iii. urban sections of the proposed Trail are unsuitable for recreational riding, especially by less experienced riders - for example, Liverpool Docks and roads/promenade through Blackpool

iv. long sections of sealed roads, which are disliked by longer distance riders

v. potentially hazardous sections of coast - due to sands, mudflats and tides.

d. potential use of paths by disabled and less mobile persons

4.3.10 Existing paths along the North West's Coast offer opportunities for use by disabled and less mobile people; in particular, as -

a. many paths have hard surfaces and few gradients enabling use by less mobile and wheelchair users - especially sealed cycle paths and promenades

b. many sections of the proposed Trail have short distances between settlements and services (e.g. toilets) **and are accessible by public transport.**

4.3.11 Shortfalls in existing provision for disabled and less mobile people include -

i. extensive sections of existing paths are unsuitable - for example, due to gaps in paths provision, poor maintenance (e.g. potholes, water-logging), routes along shingle, mudflats or dunes, and sections with steeper gradients

ii. few sections of the route are designed for disabled users and many have barriers or obstructions - including stiles, steps, difficult gates, no dropped kerbs at road crossings, and lack of seating and shelters

iii. sections of the route are exposed to winds, rains and high tides

iv. hazardous sections of road walking, footways or road crossings.

4.3.12 If proposals for the Coastal Trail are to proceed, *it is recommended that -*

i. the overall aim should be to create a continuous Coastal Trail - from Chester to Carlisle, which will enable walking and cycling on shared-use paths, quiet roads, or separate walking and cycling routes in the vicinity of each other

ii. special attention should be given to providing walking and cycling routes, which fill the gaps between existing promoted paths - e.g. between Lancashire Coastal Way and Cumbria Coastal Way

iii. priority be given to developing the Trail and linked, off-road walking and cycling route networks in the vicinity of the potential Mersey Waterfront and Ribble Estuary Regional parks and other priority areas for tourism and economic development - e.g. West Cumbria

iv. given the lack of riding routes along most of the coast and smaller riding markets (s. 5), provision for riding should only be given priority around concentrations of riding establishments or riders, or where new shared routes are being created. This policy should be reviewed when significant progress has been made on providing and up-grading walking and cycling routes

- v. where shared use paths are being provided, or existing paths are being up-graded, these should be constructed to multi-use and all-abilities standards, insofar as feasible**
- vi. priority should be given to undertaking a detailed audit of route and path options, which may comprise the Trail, including investigations of -**
 - **optional path alignments** - especially where current access arrangements are insecure (i.e. permissive paths), or the path is potentially hazardous and/or entails lengthy walking on roads or footways
 - **feasibility and costs of new river and estuary crossings** - including the use of railway bridges and embankments. - foot/cycle crossings on, or 'hung' from the railway bridges across the main estuaries could become a special feature of the Trail
 - **condition and potential for up-grading paths surfaces and ancillary facilities** (e.g. signs).

These investigations should build on the Morecambe Bay Partnership's scoping report, but provide more detailed assessments of alternative routes and development and up-grading costs.
- vii. minimum standards for path design, maintenance and signing should be agreed by the key partner organisations and should apply to all future path development and maintenance** - these standards should be sufficiently flexible to allow for the very different conditions applying to, for example, promenade sections and more 'natural' sections of the proposed Coastal Trail.

4.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT, OTHER USER SERVICES, AMENITIES AND ATTRACTIONS

- 4.4.1 Potential Trail users will require not only paths provision, but a range of services and amenities. Also, commercial and non-commercial visitor attractions may contribute to their enjoyment of the Trail 'experience'. Assessments are briefly provided below on -
 - a. public transport services**
 - b. user information and interpretation of aspects of interest**
 - c. user accommodation**
 - d. other visitor services, amenities and attractions.**
- a. public transport services**
- 4.4.2 Public transport will be essential to enable walkers and cyclists to gain access to, and return from, the Trail. **Particular strengths in respect of public transport include -**
 - i. train and bus services provide access to much of the proposed Trail corridor and provide connections to national transport networks** - making much of the Trail very accessible for longer-distance and other trips, including for tourists
 - ii. accessibility from 'gateways' for visitors from Ireland and Europe** - including the ferry ports of Liverpool, Heysham and Hull (via Trans Pennine Way) and Liverpool Airport
 - ii. public transport services provide a wide range of choices and flexibility for day/multi-day and longer trips on the proposed Trail** - enabling users to walk or cycle one-way and reach the Trail from, or return to, their home, car or holiday accommodation by public transport
 - iii. trains, buses and trams (in resorts) can enable walkers and cyclists to avoid long detours around estuaries and rivers and pass through urban and industrialised areas and commercialised resorts** - for example, walkers may

wish to avoid long detours around the Duddon Estuary or the River Wyre, or Blackpool and Morecambe seafronts

- v. **the Mersey and Wyre Ferries provide important means for walkers and cyclists to cross the Rivers Mersey and Wyre** (latter is closed in winter)
- v. **several walks and cycle rides linked to train and/or bus services are specially promoted** - for example, Merseyrail's *Rideabout* walking routes.

4.4.3 Conversely, there are **shortfalls in public transport services** -

- a. **sections of coast have limited or inconvenient public transport access** - for example, there are no train services along the coast between Knott End-on-Sea and Lancaster, or north of Maryport, and train services on the West Cumbrian coast are slow due to their many stops
- b. **cycle carriage is not permitted, or is very limited, on some trains** - the usual limit of two bikes per train could be a constraint for families or other groups - especially where cyclists wish to use the train to avoid detours around estuaries
- c. **few bus services carry cycles.**

4.4.4 Should the Coastal Trail proposals proceed, ***it is recommended that*** -

- i. ***visitor information and promotional materials for the proposed Trail should encourage walkers and cyclists to travel to, from and along sections of the Trail by public transport and provide timetables and other information***
- ii. ***opportunities should be taken to further develop and promote rail- and bus-based walking and cycling trails on, or linked to, the Coastal Trail***
- iii. ***train services should be promoted as a means whereby walkers and cyclists on the proposed Trail may avoid long detours around estuaries, or up rivers*** - especially across the main estuaries of Morecambe Bay
- iv. ***train and bus operators should be encouraged to provide, or increase provision, for cycles on services along, and connecting to, the North West Coast and especially on single stage journeys across the main estuaries.***

b. user information and interpretation of aspects of interest

4.4.5 Information on paths, features of interest, visitor services, etc. includes fingerposts, mapboards, leaflets, guidebooks and Websites. Also, many visitors wish explanations of the landscapes, natural and cultural heritage, and other aspects of interest, which may be provided through publications, interpretive boards, visitor centres and other media. **Strengths of information and interpretive provision along the coast are -**

- i. **signing and way-marking of sections of paths and cycle routes** - including promoted paths, where fingerposts indicate the destination and distance, and sections of NCN and regional cycle routes, which have identifying waymarks
- ii. **the range and often high quality of content and presentation of information provision relating to component sections of the proposed Trail and associated attractions, facilities and services** - for example, the Cheshire Cycle Way and Cumbria Cycle Way leaflets and range of walking and cycling maps and guidebooks available at tourist information centres along the coast
- iii. **the variety and quality of interpretive information and displays about features and 'stories' of natural and social heritage interest** - ranging from publications, such as *A Day on the Millennium Ribble Link*, through interpretive boards (e.g. River Lune Millennium Park and Dee Estuary Partnership's 'gateway' displays, to guided walks, museums and visitor centres, such as Merseyside Maritime Museum, Leighton Moss Visitor Centre and Silloth Discovery Centre

- iv. **initiatives to coordinate and plan interpretation and information provision along particular sections of the coast** - in particular, the *Information & Marketing Strategy for Morecambe Bay* (Morecambe Bay Partnership, 2002)

4.4.6 Shortfalls in current information and interpretive provision include -

- a. **information is fragmented and provided and disseminated by a wide range of suppliers** - there is no common 'gateway' for information on the proposed Trail and a plethora of leaflets, Websites and other information on sections of the Trail, short walks and cycle rides near the Trail, and other attractions and facilities
- b. **some leaflets and other publications are out-of-date or no longer available** - including publications on the Cumbria Coastal Way and Cumbria Cycle Way
- c. **many sections of the route have no signing, or the construction and content of the information and interpretation is of poor quality, has been vandalised, or lacks adequate maintenance** - the *Information & Marketing Strategy for Morecambe Bay* indicates that 35% of existing outdoor interpretation around the Bay is 'poor' or 'very poor' and 61% is poorly maintained
- d. **duplication or overlaps in interpretive provision** - many leaflets, wildlife displays, maritime museums and other visitor centres have overlapping content.

4.4.7 It is recommended that -

- i. **a GIS-based audit be undertaken of visitor information and interpretive provision along the Trail corridor, as the basis for a coordinated strategy for signing, waymarking and other information and interpretation associated with the Trail** - this strategy should include agreed standards for signing and information throughout the length of the Trail
- ii. **a common identity for the Trail should be developed, including a logo and other means of identifying the Trail, which should be copyrighted to enable quality control and income generation from its commercial use** - e.g. on guidebooks, maps, etc.
- iii. **when the Trail meets agreed standards, priority should be given to developing and promoting a Trail leaflet/map, guidebook and Website.**

c. visitor accommodation

4.4.8 Trail users will require accommodation which meets their needs, including -

- friendly atmosphere, including for those arriving with wet clothes and dirty footwear
- lower-cost backpackers' accommodation
- drying facilities
- secure cycle storage
- horse bed-and-breakfast (i.e. grazing and watering facilities and tack room).

4.4.9 Strengths of current provision are -

- i. **the availability of accommodation on much of the coast, including farm accommodation** - much of the accommodation is in the traditional holiday resorts
- ii. **the accommodation grading system provides some quality assurance.**

4.4.10 Shortfalls in visitor accommodation include -

- a. **gaps or limited capacity in accommodation along parts of the coast** - for example, from Southport to Lancaster and from Silloth to Carlisle
- b. **limited low cost and walker-/cyclist-/rider-friendly accommodation** - there are few youth hostels and bunkbarns, and hotels, guest houses and B&Bs in

traditional resorts may not 'welcome' walkers or cyclists, who are not typical of their clientele

- c. **quality of accommodation is still an issue, especially in the traditional resorts** - standards are variable and many establishments are not used to catering for overseas visitors (e.g. walkers from Europe).

4.4.11 Based on these assessments, ***it is recommended that -***

- i. ***Trail partner organisations, especially the Tourist Boards and development agencies, should encourage and support the development and promotion of walker-/cyclist-friendly accommodation, and rider-friendly accommodation, where there are riding routes associated with the Trail*** - this may include the development of new hostels and bunkbarns, as part of farm diversification schemes
- ii. ***an accommodation guide should be published for the Trail corridor, which provides information on approved accommodation, which guarantees a range of services for walkers and cyclists*** - e.g. drying room, secure cycle store, Trail information and advice. ***Approved walker-/cyclist-friendly accommodation should be issued with a Trail accommodation window sticker***

d. visitor services, amenities and attractions

4.4.12 Trail users will require commercial services, such as cafés, restaurants, equipment retailers and cycle hire facilities. Other facilities and amenities, such as toilets, picnic sites, seats and secure cycle parking, will contribute to users' comfort, convenience and enjoyment. Toilets and seating/rest points will be of particular advantage to disabled, elderly and young family users. Also, the coast has a wide range of attractions - adding to users' interest and enjoyment, and encouraging them to spend more time (and money) during their trip.

4.4.13 **Strengths of visitor services, amenities and attractions along the Trail corridor include -**

- i. **range of commercial visitor services** - especially in the towns and resorts and including attractive cafés, pubs and restaurants
- ii. **provision of toilets, picnic areas, seats and other amenities** - especially on the promenades, in towns, and at country parks and other visitor sites (e.g. Wirral Country Park, Leighton Moss Nature Reserve)
- iii. **many large-scale formal attractions and smaller-scale informal attractions** - e.g. Chester's Roman sites, Catalyst at Widnes, Tate Liverpool, Maryport Aquarium, historic houses, nature reserves/bird hides and country parks.

4.4.14 **Shortfalls in visitor services, amenities and attractions are -**

- a. **gaps in visitor services and key amenities; especially in more remote areas, out-of-season and mid-week** - for example, lack of eating places between Silloth and Carlisle, limited secure cycle parking and lack of toilets in many areas
- b. **varied quality of services and amenities** - the quality of eating places and other services vary markedly, and the quality and cleanliness of public toilets in rural and urban areas is very variable
- c. **lack of specialist services for Trail walkers, cyclists and riders** - such as cycle hire/servicing services and walking and cycling holiday operators offering guided holidays and baggage carrying services on the North West coast.

4.4.15 Should it be agreed to progress the Trail proposals, ***It is recommended that -***

- i. partner organisations - especially the Tourist Boards and development agencies - should encourage and support the development and promotion of specialist businesses serving walkers and cyclists on the Trail - e.g. cycle hire/repair services, baggage carrying services, walking holiday providers*
- ii. a GIS-based audit be undertaken of visitor amenities (e.g. toilets, picnic sites, cycle parking) along the Trail corridor, as the basis for developing a coordinated strategy for providing, up-grading and maintaining such facilities - especially on those sections of the Trail most likely to attract disabled, elderly and family users*
- iii. the proposed Trail leaflet and other information should include information on attractions, services and other amenities along the Trail corridor.*

5. OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL TRAIL USER MARKETS

5.1 ASSESSING POTENTIAL USER MARKETS AND USERS' ASPIRATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROPOSED TRAIL

5.1.1 There have been no assessments of market demand for the proposed North West Coastal Trail and data on use of existing paths (e.g. Lancashire Coastal Way, cycle paths) is sparse. Hence, the consultant has had to rely on proxy data and indicators of likely use and demand for the Trail, including assessments of -

- **national and regional data for walking, cycling, riding and coastal visits** (section 5.2)
- **sub-regional and local data on walking, cycling and riding and related visits to the North West's coast and coastal towns** (s. 5.3)
- **indicative data on potential recreational user groups' perceptions, likely use and aspirations for the Trail** (s. 5.4)
- **levels of use and user characteristics of other longer distance paths and cycle routes** (s. 5.5)
- **users' responses to the Trail proposal and aspirations and requirements for the Trail and associated services** (s. 5.5).

The assessments include non-leisure walking and cycle trips, as the proposed Trail is likely to cater for utilitarian walking and cycling trips (e.g. to work, shops, school) as well as for leisure trips. Finally, the consultant has prepared -

- **conclusions from the review and key market sectors likely to use the proposed Trail** (s. 5.6).

5.1.2 The scope of this assessment was limited by the available time and data. In particular, the data are often dated, not specifically relevant to the North West's coast and dispersed amongst many sources - some of which were not readily available. Where local data are available (e.g. for cycling in some towns), these are often of little relevance to the wider Trail. There are particular shortfalls in respect of riding data.

5.1.3 To provide some indication of the likely responses and aspirations of potential longer-distance Trail users (e.g. multi-day walkers and cyclists), a brief questionnaire survey was undertaken of representatives of selected walking, cycling, riding and byways organisations (s. 5.4).

5.2 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DATA FOR WALKING, CYCLING, RIDING AND COASTAL VISITS

National data for walking, cycling and riding

5.2.1 Walking and cycling are amongst the U.K.'s most popular outdoor sports and leisure pursuits. In 1996, 45% of adults walked 2 miles or more for leisure in the 4 weeks prior to the survey and 68% in the previous 12 months. This represented an increase in participation over 1993 data. However, the proportion of all journeys on foot fell to 27% in 1997-99 from 34% in 1985/86.

5.2.2 The National Travel Survey data show that in 1997-99 -

- women walked more than men, although average trip length was similar (0.6 miles)
- the main purposes of all walks were - shopping (24%), personal business or escort journeys (22%), leisure and social purposes (20%), and casual walks, including dog walking and jogs (15%). In autumn 1999, 11% of the workforce walked to work

- 10% of males and 13% of females walked with some difficulty and 1 in 30 needed assistance or could not walk on their own.

5.2.3 In 1996, 11% of adults cycled for leisure in the previous 4 weeks, and 21% in the previous year (on-and off-road trips). This represented a major increase in leisure cycling in comparison to 1987 - from 8% to 15% of all trips¹. The more recent National Travel Survey provides data only for on-road cycling², which shows that in 1999/2001 -

- the average person took 17 on-road cycle trips/year and travelled 41 miles/year
- 23% of cycle trips were under a mile, 67% between 1 and 5 miles, and 10% for 5 or more miles. The average trip length was 2.4 miles
- 16-24 year old males made twice as many cycle trips as other age groups, and males made more cycle trips (25 trips/year) than women (10 trips/year)
- the main purposes of road cycling trips were work/business (43%), leisure or social purposes (30%) and shopping (13%)
- most cycle trips are in summer (42% more trips in July than an average month)².

No similar data are available for riding.

5.2.4 Research for the Countryside Agency's Greenways initiative³ provides insights into walkers', cyclists' and riders' considerations and desires for off-road routes -

- most walkers prefer to avoid built-up areas, traffic noise and pollution and use local greenspace for short walks, and the countryside or seaside for longer walks
- runners prefer dry, firm routes, with lighting in winter
- cyclists wish to avoid traffic dangers and built-up areas. Casual cyclists like managed areas (e.g. cycle paths), urban cycleways are primarily used by commuters and cycle clubs, racing bike users prefer roads, and mountain bikers like challenging off-road routes
- horse riders prefer off-road routes, with soft surfaces and no sharp stones
- aspirations for multi-use routes are - avoidance of traffic, pleasant surroundings, no litter, graffiti or broken glass, maintained surfaces, personal safety (avoiding potentially troublesome areas), secure parking, no motorbikes, less/more user-friendly barriers, and more signing and information.

National and regional day visits and tourist visits to the coast and countryside

5.2.5 The *UK Day Visits Survey* indicates that, in 1998, there were 1,248m leisure day visits to England's countryside (24% of all day visits) and 177m visits to the seaside and coast (3% of all trips; 90m to the open coast)⁴. **Of 704m leisure day visits in the North West** (including town and city visits; 13% of UK trips), **116m day visits were to the countryside** (16% of all regional trips; 9% of countryside trips) **and 14m to the seaside and coast** (2%; 8%). These data suggest that levels of countryside and coastal day visits in the North West are below the national average. This may be partially due to the high urban populations of the North West, as lower than average levels of countryside and coastal day visits are replicated in other regions with large urban populations.

¹ *Transport Statistics: Cycling in Great Britain - Personal Travel Factsheet 5 - January 2001*, DETR, 2001

² *National Statistics: Cycling in England - Personal Travel Factsheet 5b - January 2003*, DoT, 2003

³ *Demand for Greenways* MEW Research for Countryside Commission, 1997; *Demand for Greenways - presentation to the Countryside Commission* (unpublished), 1997

⁴ *UK Day Visits Survey*, SCPR, 2000

- 5.2.6 The *UK Day Visits Survey* does not provide break-downs of data by regions, but the data provide a picture of seaside and coastal trips across England; for example -
- 35% of trips included a walk - 51% were short walks/strolls and 49% were for 2+ miles. For 27% of all trips walking was the main purpose
 - 3% of trips had cycling as an activity during the trip, or as the main purpose
 - under 0.5% of trips included horse riding
 - bird watching and/or nature watching was a main purpose of 3% of trips.
 - over half (55%) of seaside/coast day visits lasted up to 4 hours (28% were for up to 2 hours). The average duration of such trips was 4.8 hours
 - cars/vans are the main form of transport for seaside and coast trips (62% of trips). 26% arrive on foot and 3% by bicycle. 32% of visits involve journeys of under 5 miles, 28% journeys of 5-20 miles and 45% journeys of over 20 miles.
- 5.2.7 If average levels of visitor expenditures on seaside and coastal day trips (£10.42/trip) are set against the numbers of such trips in 1986, then **day visitors to the North West's coast may spend some £142m/year, excluding coastal town and city day visits**. In addition to day visits, the North West - i.e. Cumbria and North West Tourist Board areas - attracted some 15.1m holiday and VFR (visiting friends & relatives) visits by UK residents, who spent around £2,174m within the area⁵. There were a further 0.89m overseas visits (including holiday, VFR and business visits) which generated estimated expenditures of £229m. Many of these visits and much of the expenditures will be in towns, cities and inland areas (e.g. national parks), rather than the coast.
- 5.2.8 Research for the Countryside Agency has estimated that **UK and overseas tourist visits and day visits to the North West's countryside in 1998 generated some £1,162m and supported 34,230 full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs**⁶. A high proportion of these jobs will be in areas such as the Lake District National Park, but a proportion will be in coastal areas.
- 5.2.9 Data on activities undertaken by UK residents on holiday trips (i.e. excluding business and VFR visits) shows that 3.3m visits out of a total of 3.5m visits to the Cumbria Tourist Board area included an activity, including
- 2.4m short walks (up to 2 miles) and 1.5m longer walks (including hill walks away from the coast)
 - 0.4m cycle trips, including 0.3m off-road and 0.1m touring cycling trips
 - 0.2m horse riding or pony trekking trips (often on enclosed land/open countryside, rather than promoted trails).
- 5.2.10 While visitors to formal attractions in the North West often arrive by car or public transport and may not undertake activities during their visits, a proportion of the visitors to coastal attractions may be encouraged to walk or even cycle when in the vicinity. The following table (Figure 5.1) illustrates the levels of visits to selected countryside, wildlife, cultural heritage and other attractions in the vicinity of the coast, which may be of interest to users of the proposed Coastal Trail. More commercial and urban attractions - e.g. Blackpool Tower, Blackpool, urban museums - have been excluded, as these are often the focus for urban tourism and may not attract Trail users.

⁵ *Key Facts of Tourism for the North West of England 2001 and Key Facts of Tourism for Cumbria*, www.staruk.org.uk; *Cumbria Tourism Facts - United Kingdom Tourism Survey 2001*, Cumbria Tourist Board & English Tourism Council, 2001

⁶ *The Economic Impact of Recreation and Tourism in the English Countryside*, Research Notes CRN 15, The Countryside Agency, 2001

Figure 5.1 Annual Visits to Selected Coastal Attractions in the North West

(selection includes attractions of potential interest to Trail users)

Selected Attraction	Visits (year)
Silloth Discovery Centre	20,000 (target)
Maryport Maritime Museum	17,216 (2001)
Ravenglass Railway Museum	105,000 (2001 est.)
Lakes Glass Centre, Ulverston	10,848 (1999)
Leighton Hall, Carnforth	85,000 (1999)
Leighton Moss Nature Reserve, nr. Carnforth	141,989 (2001)
Lancaster Maritime Museum	27,250 (2000)
Sealife Centre, Blackpool	497,000 (1995)
Wyreside Ecology Centre, Thornton	17,474 (2000)
Merseyside Maritime Museum	229,977 (2001, est.)
Port Sunlight Heritage Centre	24,000 (2001)
Historic Warships	32,310 (2001)
Dee Estuary (RSPB Reserve)	6,350 (2001)
Wirral Country Park, Thurstaston	300,000 (2001, est.)
Catalyst, Widnes	39,862 (2001)

sources: various NWTB & ETB publications; *Tourism in Lancashire*, Lancs. C.C., 2002; RSPB

5.3 SUB-REGIONAL AND LOCAL DATA ON WALKING, CYCLING, RIDING AND RELATED VISITS TO THE NORTH WEST'S COAST AND COASTAL TOWNS

5.3.1 As indicated above, there are few or no recent datasets on walking, cycling and riding at the county or more local levels - for example, for sections of the coast, or specific foot or cycle paths on the route of the proposed Trail. Exceptionally, there have been more general surveys of visitors to the Lancashire countryside and Sefton and Wirral coasts and a study of demand for off-road cycling in Lancashire. Other datasets tend to be too specific for this study (e.g. cycling data for specific sites on very few days). As a result, the consultant has only been able to draw together a patchwork of data, which are illustrative of some patterns of coastal visits, walking and cycling in the vicinity of the proposed Trail, or wider areas through which it will pass. As far as could be ascertained, there are no relevant data on riding.

5.3.2 A survey of demand for countryside access in Lancashire⁷ indicates that of the sample of Lancashire's population interviewed (808 interviews) -

- 42% visit their local countryside at least once a week, while 16% only visit rural areas once a year or less often and 7% never visit the countryside. 72% would like to visit the countryside more frequently; especially less frequent users
- lower than average countryside visits were recorded in Lytham St. Annes (possibly due to older than average population and availability of promenade walks), and in Preston and Lancaster (possibly due to limitations in the countryside on the 'doorstep' and the motorway system acting as a 'barrier' to the wider countryside)

⁷ *Assessing Demand Information in Relation to Countryside Access* Environmental Design Consultancy & Aspect Market Research Ltd., for The Countryside Agency & Lancashire C.C., 2001

- the propensity for countryside visits is influenced by access to private transport, life-stage, personal circumstances and health and available time
 - on their most recent visit, $\frac{2}{3}$ ^{rds} of visitors drove to the countryside and $\frac{1}{4}$ walked
 - deterrents to countryside visits were vandalism, dog fouling, poor maintenance of paths and intrusive developments
 - incentives for visits would include informative waymarking, signboards, leaflets, better parking (young families), toilets (families, elderly), information on gradients, terrain and distance (walkers with impaired mobility), themed tracks and easier access on foot, by bicycles and public transport.
- 5.3.3 The *Quality of Coastal Towns - Summary Report*⁸ estimates an overall leisure demand for 4.5m visits to the Merseyside Coast, comprising 2.5m visits by residents of Merseyside, 1m day trips by regional residents living outside Merseyside, 0.75m visits by tourists staying on Merseyside, and 0.25m tourists staying in the Region but outside Merseyside. Also, there may be some 50,000 educational visits each year. These visitors to the Merseyside coast are spend an estimated £63m/year in the Region. The report expects growth to 4.85m coastal visits (+8%) and an increase in expenditures by £8.7m (+14%) by 2008. Walking and cycling visits, visits by public transport and activity holidays are all expected to grow and cleanliness, safety, amenities - e.g. toilets, shelters, seating -and waymarked walking routes and off-road cycleways will be important in encouraging visitor growth.
- 5.3.4 A survey of visitors (6,300 responses) to the Sefton and Wirral coasts for the Quality of Coastal Towns project⁹ indicates that
- coastal visitors were mainly from the local area (68% were Merseyside residents)
 - most (90%) were repeat visitors, and 50% of Sefton coast visitors and 44% of Wirral coast visitors visit the area at least once a month
 - 57% spend $\frac{1}{2}$ -hour to 2 hours at the coast and the main purpose is to walk
 - their main likes are the landscapes and peacefulness. Dislikes are lack of cleanliness, dogs/dog fouling, conflicts with other users, site management, (personal) safety issues and poor access. They want more toilets.
- 5.3.5 Key findings of the study of off-road cycling demand in Lancashire¹⁰ -
- the potential market for off-road recreational cycling (mountain biking + cycling on traffic-free routes) in Lancashire is around $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population (i.e. 350,000)
 - cyclists were predominantly male (79%) and $\frac{1}{3}$ rd were 35-44 years of age
 - 68% of users of traffic-free routes arrived by bike
 - market growth is likely to be among occasional cyclists on part-/day cycle trips
 - requirements to meet potential growth are - more routes and cycle hire services, more/upgraded routes nearer homes, better links between routes, better maintenance of routes, increased personal safety and secure cycle parking, more information and better signing and waymarking of routes and less user conflicts.
- 5.3.6 While there are no recent data for specific paths along the Trail route, site surveys show typical levels of cycling on cycle paths and cycling and walking on promenades in Lancashire in May and August. The data for promenades are at the 'high end' of levels of use, having been gained in mid-summer on sunny days. These data show -

⁸ *Quality of Coastal Towns: Assessment of Coastal Visitor Facilities - Summary Report* WS Atkins, Countrywise & Geoff Broom Assocs., 2001

⁹ *Quality of Coastal Towns Interreg IIc Project - Merseyside Coast Visitor Research 2000*, Merseyside Partnership, 2002

¹⁰ *A study of demand for off-road recreational cycling in Lancashire* Bowles Green Partnership, 2002

- often high levels of shared use on promenades and other routes. Cyclists comprised over $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of users of Heysham Promenade and $\frac{2}{5}$ ^{ths} of users of Cleveleys Promenade in peak summer
- a lower proportion of cyclists to walkers use the Outer Fleetwood and Morecambe Promenades, but levels of use by both types of user are high
- significant use of Lancaster's Millennium Bridge, the Halton-Crook O'Lune Cycle Path and Morecambe Bay Promenade in May, with significant levels of week-day utilitarian cycle trips on the Millennium Bridge and Morecambe Promenade.

Similar patterns of use are likely to be evident for other Promenades and hard surfaced, urban seaside paths in Merseyside and Southern Lancashire.

Figure 5.2 Use of Promenades and Selected Lancaster Cycle Routes

Wyre & Morecambe Promenade Surveys – 2001			
Location	Date/Period	Cyclists/day [% of users]	Pedestrians/day
Fleetwood Outer Promenade	22 Aug (Wed.)	114 [12%]	788
Cleveleys Promenade	27 Aug (Mon. Bank Hol.)	256 [42%]	351
Knott End-Pilling Sea Wall	21 Aug (Tues.)	11 [16%]	58
Heysham Promenade	29 Aug (Tues.)	174 [35%]	316
Bare Promenade	20 Aug (Mon.)	97 [24%]	299
Morecambe Prom (Town Centre)	23 Aug (Thurs.)	287 [11%]	2,221
Lancaster City Cycle Surveys - 2002			
Lancaster Millennium Bridge	May - weekday av. flows	593 - 777	not counted
	- Sunday av. flows	242 - 610	
Halton - Crook O'Lune (excl. May Hol. Monday)	May - weekday av. flows	85 - 128	not counted
	- Sunday av. flows	124 - 402	not counted
Morecambe Prom (Town Centre) (excl. May Hol. Monday)	May - weekday av. flows	137 - 149	not counted
	- Sunday av. flows	143 - 317	not counted

5.4 DATA ON LONGER DISTANCE PATHS AND CYCLE ROUTES AND THEIR USE

National Trail data

5.4.1 There is little prospect of the proposed Coastal Trail being designated as a national trail, at least in the short- to medium-terms (s. 6.4.3); however, it shares some of the characteristics of national trails and is likely to draw from some of the same market sectors - albeit that there may be a greater emphasis on day visitors and cycling on the Coastal Trail. The data below illustrate the high levels of use and the economic benefits which well-managed and well-promoted longer distance trails can generate -

- in 1994, the South West Coast Path (1,014 km) attracted some 1m visitors (use estimated currently as 7-8m), with expenditures of £15m and supporting 800 full-time equivalent jobs¹¹
- in 1994/95, Offa's Dyke Path (285km) was walked by 120,000 people who spent some £2m in the local economy (£20 visitor spend for £1 spent on management)¹²
- in 1996/97, the Pembrokeshire Coast Path (299 km) was used by some 287,000 visitors, who generated expenditures of £14m (£57 visitor spend for every £1 on management) and supported some 567 local jobs¹³
- in 1998 (April-September), some 159,000 walkers on the Cleveland Way spent around £1m in the local economy (long distance walkers spent £460,000 and short-distance/day walkers spent £540,000)¹⁴.

5.4.2 The average national trail user -

- is male, aged from 35 to 59, working full-time and walks with one companion
- if on a long distance walk, spends around £20/night on accommodation and at least £5 on other items - mainly food and drink

¹¹ *More than just a path - A Strategy for the South West Coast Path to 2005*, South West Coast Project Office, Exeter, undated

¹² *Offa's Dyke Walkers Boost Local Economy*, press release, Offa's Dyke Path Officer, 2000

¹³ *Pembrokeshire Coast Path - National Trail user Survey 1996-97*, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, et

¹⁴ *Cleveland Way Management and Marketing Strategy*, Cleveland Way Project, Helmsley, 2002

- is attracted by scenery, peace and quiet, exercise and being in the countryside
- is most likely to be disappointed by uneven, muddy and boggy paths, mountain bikers and motor-bikers, litter and poor signing¹⁵.

National Cycle Network data

5.4.3 Sustrans has monitored parts of the National Cycle Network over the last 4 years. No monitoring points in 2001 were on proposed Trail; however, findings¹⁶ of relevance are -

- use of the overall network is estimated to have risen by 3% from 2000 to 2001
- 50% of users were cyclists, who cycled for an average trip of 20 miles, and 48% were walkers, who walked for an average of 5 miles
- one-quarter of cycling users were new, restarting or occasional recreational cyclists - especially in more deprived areas. Many new users are women, who are generally under-represented in cycling activity
- 70% of users indicated that cycle route provision helped them take more exercise.

5.4.4 Use of the C2C Cycle Route from Whitehaven/Workington to Sunderland/Tynemouth is of more relevance to the proposed Coastal Trail, given its start/end point in West Cumbria and potential linkages with the Coastal Trail. Data for 2000 indicate that -

- 12,000 to 12,500 cyclists cycled all the C2C over an average of 3.75 days
- all-way C2C cyclists spent on average £33/person/day. The total annual expenditure generated was £1.5m
- almost 60% of cyclists were from around the route, or Northern England. Others were from the Midlands (18%), South (15%), rest of UK (5%) or overseas (3%)
- over half of users were males of 26 - 55 years of age. There was an increase in female cyclists from 20% in 1999 to 25% in 2000.

Use of the route by walkers and riders was not recorded (much of the C2C is on-road).

5.5 RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY OF POTENTIAL USER GROUPS

5.5.1 Postal questionnaires were sent to selected sub-/regional representatives of the Ramblers' Association, European Ramblers' Association, Byways & Bridleways Trust, Cyclists Touring Club and Long Distance Walkers' Association. The British Horse Society's Development Officer forwarded questionnaires to riding groups. The selected representatives were those considered likely to have some knowledge of all, or sections of, the route. 26 responses were received (17 from walking interests, 5 from cycling interests, 3 from riders, 1 from the Byways and Bridleways Trust).

5.5.2 The survey was not intended to provide a statistically valid or fully representative range of views of potential Trail users, but to provide initial opinions from those representing more 'committed' and often longer than average distance walkers, cyclists (mainly on-road cyclists) and riders. Their views do not necessarily represent the views of more casual and less committed users, who may walk, cycle or ride less frequently, or mainly at weekends or on holiday, including families. A more comprehensive survey was outwith the scope of this study. The responses are summarised in Appendix B and an overview analysis is provided below.

5.5.3 Potential use of the Trail

a. Long-distance, end-to-end use of the route

- 40% of respondents are very likely (**20%**) or likely (**20%**), and 44% are unlikely (**12%**) or very unlikely (**32% - walkers only**), to use the Trail end-to-end

¹⁵ The National Trail Users Survey - Summary 2000, Countryside Agency, Cheltenham, 2000

¹⁶ National Cycle Network - Route Usage Monitoring Programme Sustrans, Newcastle, 2002

- **41% of the walkers are very likely or likely to walk end-to-end, but 47% are unlikely or very unlikely (35%) to do so**
 - **40% of cyclists are very likely/likely, and 40% are unlikely, to cycle end-to-end**
 - **two of the three riders are likely to use the route end-to-end.**
- b. Multi-/single day trips on the route
- Walkers are the most likely users of the route for multi-/single day trips, although there is some interest by cyclists and riders
- **three-quarters (74%) of the walkers are very likely (67%) or likely (17%) to use the route for multi-/single day trips**
 - **only 20% of the cyclists are likely to use the route for such trips and 60% are unlikely (40%) or very unlikely (20%)**
 - **riders are less certain. One of the three respondents is likely to make multi-single day trips - although all three want the route to be available for riders**

The low/mixed levels of interest by cyclists and riders is partly due to the cycling respondents being largely interested in road cycling and viewing the route as having limited interest and being exposed to the elements, and a general dislike by all respondents - especially riders - of the urban sections of the route.

5.5.4 Sections of the route of most/least attractiveness to potential users

- Solway to Barrow is considered the most attractive section by most respondents (78%) **(75% of walkers; 75% of cyclists, 100% of riders)**
- Morecambe Bay is highly considered by users (70%) **(63% of walkers, 100% of cyclists and 67% of riders)**
- **50% of the cyclists consider the Preston to Liverpool section attractive**
- **50% of the walkers consider the Wirral section attractive for walking**
- least attractive sections are Morecambe to Preston **(65% of respondents)**, Preston to Liverpool **(41%)** and Wirral **(71%)**. The Wirral is the least attractive section for cycling (100%).

5.5.5 Comparisons with other long-distance trails (South West Coast Path, Pembrokeshire Coast Path, Cleveland Way, Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway & C2C Cycle Route)

- walkers' views are mixed - **one or two considered that it compares very favourably with some of the other examples (especially C2C and Pennine Way)**
- cyclists consider the route does not compare favourably with other routes
- riders think the route compares favourably with the other routes.

5.5.6 Information preferences

- users are likely to use a range of information **(e.g. published map/leaflet, OS map, guidebook, Website)**
- they prefer a published map/leaflet **(most likely to use: 80%; likely to use: 8%)** or OS map **(85%; 12%)**, to a guidebook **(39%; 35%)** or Website **(26%; 26%)**.

Other suggestions included the provision of information on -

- **accommodation and services lists, including hostels, horse B&Bs, vets and farriers**
- **guided walks (e.g. by Ramblers' groups)**
- **information and interpretive boards**
- **signposts with mileage from village to village.**

5.5.7 Involvement in Trail management

As representatives of groups, the respondents represent those most likely to support Trail management, but some indicated a lack of time due to other commitments.

- 62% of respondents are very likely/likely to be prepared to represent users' views in Trail planning and management
- 16% are very likely/likely to assist in Trail maintenance
- 12% are very likely/likely to assist as voluntary Trail wardens/rangers.

5.5.8 Potential benefits of the Trail

- 79% of respondents think the Trail may provide an important new amenity for residents of the North West
- 42% think it could provide an important new route for trips to works, school, etc., but 33% disagreed
- 75% think it may attract more activity tourists to the North West.

5.5.9 Main themes from users' comments (see detailed comments above)

a. walkers' representatives

- **support in principle for coastal path**
- **uncertainties over potential popularity; most likely to attract some all-route walkers and local walkers, also some European visitors**
- **need to resolve gaps in route and long detours, and improve sections in poor states of repair (e.g. parts of Cumbrian Coast, Wirral)**
- **urban areas are less attractive, but may attract local walkers**
- **many places and features of interest on route**

b. cyclists' representatives

- **not of great benefit to cyclists - better to invest in local routes**
- **unlikely to attract use for trips to work, shops, etc.**
- **need to avoid main roads (esp. A590, Levens Bridge, Southport-Preston)**
- **different types of cyclist have different needs (e.g. on-road, off-road, cycleways)**
- **coastal cycling is too exposed and boring**
- **cycle carriage on trains is restricted**
- **many places and features of interest on route**

c. horse riders' representatives

- **support in principle, but lack of routes**
- **priority should be given to local routes**
- **traffic hazards and urban areas are not suitable for riding**
- **need to ensure horse accommodation and services for riders**
- **issues of perceived inter-user conflicts on multi-use routes**
- **attractive beaches and other areas for riding.**

5.6 PRINCIPAL USER MARKET SEGMENTS FOR THE PROPOSED COASTAL TRAIL

5.6.1 From the previous assessments and knowledge of other trails and activity market development programmes, the consultant has developed Figures 5.3-5.5, which show

- principal user market segments for the proposed Trail
- typical characteristics and requirements of each market segment
- the potential for growth in visitor numbers and expenditures of each of segment.

These assessments are illustrative and indicative, as there are no definitive datasets for the North West's coast which would enable detailed assessments.

Figure 5.3 Walking - Principal Potential Market Segments for the Proposed Trail

Activity Segment	Characteristics	Requirements	Growth Potential	Potential Spend
Utilitarian Trips (e.g. school, work, shopping)	short journeys home-based may link to public transport all ages individuals/families	0-2 miles pavements/off-road routes no information needs good/hard surfaces maintained routes	Medium	Nil
Leisure Part-/Day Trips	part-/all day trips home/holiday based public/private transport all ages individuals/families/groups	0-15 miles (most users) 5+ miles (serious users) off-road/shared paths all surfaces/maintained routes car parking/transport links signing/information places to eat/drink	Medium/High (NW walkers) Medium/High (visitors)	Low/Me dium (NW walkers) Medium/High (visitors)
Longer-Distance Walkers (multi-day/ all-Trail walks)	multi-day/weekend/weeks daily accommodation change public/private transport independent/package trips mainly middle/older ages individuals/small groups	15-30 miles mainly off-road paths/routes all surfaces/maintained routes transport links signing & information visitor services self-/guided packages	Medium/High (multi-day trips) Low/Medium (all-Trail trips)	Medium/High (multi-day trips) Low/Medium (all-Trail trips)
Activity Holiday Walking Trips (e.g. walking/ multi-activity holidays)	multi-day/weekend/weeks holiday-based public/private transport independent/package trips all ages individuals/families/groups	5-20 miles off-road paths/routes all surfaces/maintained routes car parking/transport links route signing & information visitor services self-/guided packages	Medium/High	Medium/High
Club/Group Trips (e.g. Ramblers' day/holiday visits)	day/multi-day/weekend/weeks home-/holiday based public/private transport independent/package trips mainly middle-aged/elderly group visits	5-20 miles off-road paths/routes all surfaces/maintained routes maintained routes car parking/transport links information + some services self-/guided packages	Medium/Hig h (day visits) Medium (holidays)	Low/mediu m (day visits) Medium (holidays)
Educational Trips (schools, colleges)	day/multi-day/weekend/weeks home/accommodation based public/private transport organised trips mainly young groups	2-20 miles off-road paths/routes all surfaces/maintained routes minibus/coach park/transport information + some services educational packs	Medium/Hig h (day visits) Low/Medium (overnight trips)	Low (day visits) Low (overnight trips)
Less Able Trips (e.g. infirm, wheel- chair users)	part-/day/multi-day/weekends home-/holiday based public/private transport independent/package trips all age groups individual/family/groups	0-10 miles off-road/shared use paths hard/maintained surfaces car parking/public transport route signing/information some visitor services	Medium (day visits) Low (holidays)	Low/Mediu m (day visits) Medium (holidays)
Events (e.g. charity walks, marathons)	organised day events home-based/night away public/private transport younger/all age groups individual/family/groups	5-25 miles off-road/shared use routes sound/maintained surfaces car parking/public transport services (e.g. toilets)	High	Medium

Note: Potential Spend assumes services (e.g. cafés, pubs. etc.) are available on/near route.

Figure 5.4 Cycling - Principal Potential Market Segments for the Proposed Coastal Trail

Activity Segment	Characteristics	Requirements	Growth Potential	Potential Spend
Utilitarian Trips (e.g. school, work, shopping)	short journeys home-based all ages individuals/families	0-10 miles on/off-road & cycleways linear routes no information needs	Medium (NW cyclists)	Nil (NW cyclists)
Leisure Trips (e.g. part-/day trips)	part-/all day trips home/holiday based bike hire potential public/private transport use all ages individuals/families/groups	0-20 miles (most users) 20+ miles (serious cyclists) car parking/transport on-/off-road & cycleways signing/information services/bike hire (visitors)	Medium/High (NW cyclists) Medium/High (visitors)	Low (NW cyclists) Medium (visitors)
Longer-Distance Cyclists (multi-day/ all-Trail walks)	multi-day/weekend/weeks daily accommodation change public/private transport independent/package trips mainly middle/older ages individuals/groups	20-100 miles roads/off-road & cycleways transport links signing & information visitor services self-/guided packages	Medium/High (multi-day trips) Medium (all-Trail trips)	Medium/High (multi-day trips) Medium (all-Trail trips)
Activity Holidays (e.g. cycling/multi-activity holidays)	multi-day/weekend/weeks holiday-based public/private transport use younger/middle-aged couples/families/groups use accommodation, etc. independent/package trips	all distances car parking/transport links on/off-road & cycleways signing/information services/bike hire self-/guided packages	Medium/High (visitors)	Medium/High (visitors)
Club/Group Trips (e.g. CTC day/ holiday visits)	½-day/multi-day/weekend/ week group visits home-/holiday based independent/package trips keen/experienced cyclists often middle/older ages	10+ miles mostly roads & cycleways route information some visitor services self-/guided packages	Medium/High (day visits) Medium (holidays)	Low (day visits) Medium (holidays)
Events (e.g. charity/fun events, races)	part-/day/weekend events mainly home-based public/private transport use all age groups individuals/groups	20+ miles on-/off-road & cycleways Short-distance off-road/ ATB events	Medium (charity events) Static (competitions)	Low/Medium (charity events) Low/Medium (competitions)

Note: *Potential Spend* assumes services (e.g. cafés, pubs, etc.) are available on/near route.

Figure 5.5 Riding - Principal Potential Market Segments for the Proposed Coastal Trail

Activity Segment	Characteristics	Requirements	Growth Potential	Potential Spend
Leisure Trips (part-/day trips, including horse exercising)	part-/all day home/holiday based horse hire potential younger/middle-aged mainly female individuals/families/groups	0-10 miles (most riders) minor roads/bridleways/ shared use circular paths car/horse box parking signing/information services/horse hire	Medium (NW riders) Low (visitors)	Low (NW riders) Low (visitors)
Longer-Distance Riding Trips (multi-day/ all-Trail walks)	multi-day/weekend/weeks daily accommodation change public transport independent/package trips mainly middle age females individuals/groups	20-40 miles minor roads/bridleways/ shared use paths signing & information rider/horse services self-/guided packages	Low (multi-day trips) Nil (all-Trail trips)	Low (multi-day trips) Nil (all-Trail trips)
Activity Holiday Trips (e.g. multi-day activity holidays)	multi-day/weekend/weeks holiday-based young/middle-aged female individuals/groups independent/package trips	all distances minor roads/bridleways/ shared use paths signing/information car/horse box parking rider/horse services/hires self-/guided packages	Low (NW riders) Low (visitors)	Low (NW riders) Low (visitors)

Notes: *Potential Spend* assumes services (e.g. cafés, pubs, etc.) are available on/near route.

Most equestrian events are site-based (e.g. jumping, dressage). Lack of potential routes for long distance riding.

5.6.2 The assessments suggest that **market segments with most potential for growth are likely to be -**

- **leisure part-day and day walking and cycling trips**
- **multi-day walking and cycling trips** - but, not all-Trail trips
- **activity holiday walking and cycling visits**
- **club/group day walking and cycling visits**
- **educational day visits** - walking only
- **events** - especially charity walks.

5.6.3 The market segments likely to produce the least numbers of users, at least in the short- to medium-terms, are likely to include -

- **longer-distance riding trips**
- **riding activity holidays.**

5.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW OF POTENTIAL MARKETS FOR THE PROPOSED COASTAL TRAIL

5.7.1 In summary, **this overview illustrates -**

a. **the dearth of data on walking, cycling and riding on the North West coast, from which estimates of potential use of the proposed Trail and economic benefits may be derived**

b. **the popularity of walking and cycling for leisure and as means of travel** (e.g. to work, shops, school) - for example, 45% of U.K. adults walked 2+miles for leisure and 11% cycled in the 4 weeks prior to survey. Leisure cycling is growing - from 8% to 15% of cycling trips from 1987 to 1996. The potential market for off-road cycling in Lancashire has been estimated as one-quarter of the population

c. **the popularity of countryside visits (116m in 1998) and coastal/seaside visits (14m) in the North West, including for walking and cycling** - 42% of Lancashire's population visit the countryside at least once a week and it is estimated that there are 4.5m visits/year to Merseyside's coast, including U.K. and overseas visitors. Across the U.K., 35% of all coastal/seaside trips included a walk (49% for 2+miles), 3% a cycle ride and under 0.5% a horse ride

d. **there are no readily available data on riding at the North West and local scales and levels of medium-/longer-distance riding on trails are likely to be low** - partly due to the lack of provision for riders

e. **promenades and cycle paths attract significant levels of shared use by walkers and cyclists**

f. **several attractions of potential interest to Trail users gain over 100,000 visitors/year** (e.g. Ravenglass Railway Museum, Leighton Moss Nature Reserve, Wirral Country Park). **Visitors to these and other coastal attractions may be encouraged to walk or cycle on the Trail; thereby, staying longer in the area**

g. **data from national trails and cycle routes illustrate the economic benefits of longer-distance walking and cycling routes** - for example, users of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path in 1996/97 spent some £14m locally and supported 567 jobs and those cycling all of the C2C Cycle Route in 2000 spent around £1.5m

h. **principal likes of user groups include -**

- **walkers: peace and quiet, countryside and seaside/coastal scenery and dry/firm routes. Longer-distance walkers want a challenge**

- **cyclists: cycle paths** (casual cyclists) **and off-road routes** (mountain bikers)
 - **all users: pleasant surroundings, maintained surfaces, good information and signing, secure parking**
 - i. **principal dislikes of users are -**
 - **built-up areas and paths through areas where users feel insecure**
 - **traffic hazards**
 - **litter, graffiti and broken glass**
 - **muddy/boggy and other poorly maintained path surfaces.**
 - j. **over 10% of adults have some difficulty in walking and prefer routes with firm, dry surfaces and no steep gradients, barriers or obstructions (e.g. stiles)**
 - k. **significant potential for educational use of the proposed Trail** - for example, Merseyside's coast is estimated to attract 50,000 educational visits/year.
- 5.7.2 The user groups' survey gives some indication of the potential response of more committed walkers, cyclists and riders to the proposed Trail; for example -
- **while the Trail is unlikely to appeal to all longer-distance walkers and cyclists, some 40% of the walking and cycling respondents and two of the three riders indicated potential use of the Trail end-to-end**
 - **perceived deterrents to longer-distance use of the Trail include the urban sections and resorts, detours around the estuaries and rivers, exposure to winds, etc., and perceptions that the coast presents few challenges (e.g. hills)**
 - **the Cumbria and Morecambe Bay sections are considered the most attractive by more committed users. The southern sections - especially the Wirral - are the least attractive, except to those living in these areas**
 - **overall the respondents considered that the Trail could provide a valuable amenity for the North West and attract walking, cycling and riding tourists.**
- 5.7.3 Following from these assessments, ***it is recommended that -***
- i. ***a programme of user surveys should be undertaken on currently available sections of the proposed Trail*** - e.g. sections of the Wirral Way and Lancaster and Cumbria Coastal Ways - ***to establish users' numbers, characteristics, needs and aspirations, and to provide baseline data for monitoring the quantitative and qualitative impacts of the proposed Trail***
 - ii. ***partner organisations should recognise that the proposed Trail is unlikely to meet the aspirations of a significant proportion of traditional long-distance walkers, but its development and marketing should be targeted at a broader range of multi-day and day walking and cycling visitor market segments - including activity holiday and recreational and educational groups.*** This recommendation supports the recommendation (above) that the proposed Trail be developed and promoted as the North West Coast Discovery Trail
 - iii. ***in the short- to medium-terms, provision for riding should be given low priority, due to the lack of evidence of strong market potential.*** However, -
 - ***further research should be undertaken to identify communities along the Trail, where there is significant local demand for riding***
 - ***where practical, the development of walking and cycling routes should include provision for horse riders on shared use, or parallel, paths***

- iv. sections of the proposed Trail should be enhanced and promoted for use by less able and disabled people** - e.g. by removing barriers, providing seats, etc..
- v. given the proximity of the proposed Trail to less advantaged urban and rural communities, development of the Trail should include walking and cycling link routes to such communities and the promotion of Trail use by such communities** - e.g. through guided walk programmes
- vi. sections of the Trail should be promoted as 'health walks' to promote healthier lifestyles and personal well-being within local communities.**

6. KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED COASTAL TRAIL

6.1 KEY FINDINGS OF THE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

6.1.1 The previous sections of this report (Part A) have set out -

- the concept underlying the proposed Coastal Trail (s. 2)
- the policy context and how the proposed Trail 'fits' specific policy areas (s. 3)
- outline assessments of the route and associated infrastructure and services (s. 4)
- identification and assessments of potential Trail user markets and the requirements and potential for growth of these (s. 5).

This section draws together the findings of these sections and presents the overall conclusions of the Feasibility Study. Subsequent sections (Part B) evaluate and recommend how the development of the Trail may best be progressed.

6.1.2 The various elements of the feasibility assessments demonstrate that -

- the North West Coastal Trail concept is ambitious and can serve a range of recreational and other markets** - encompassing a multi-modal route from Chester and the Dee Estuary to Carlisle and the Solway, which will cater for longer-distance, multi-day, day and part-day walkers, cyclists and, where feasible, horse riders and all-abilities use
- the multi-faceted nature of the Trail concept, its development and potential user markets will enable the Trail to contribute towards achieving a range of public policy 'agendas'** - for example, through promoting the image and acting as a showcase for the North West, and bringing sustainable leisure, travel, economic and environmental regeneration and health benefits to its communities. In particular the Trail proposals fit well with the focus on developing regional park-type resources in the North West within the Region's economic and tourism development strategies
- the landscapes, topography, and natural, cultural and built heritage of the North West's coast and coastal settlements are major strengths of the proposed Trail. Conversely, the proposed Trail will pass through extensive urban, commercial and/or industrial areas, including some poorer quality urban environments** - for example, on the Wirral, Merseyside and The Fylde
- in the above respects (c.), **parts of the proposed Trail differ markedly from other coastal paths and long-distance trails and are likely to appeal to different user markets than traditional long-distance walkers, who generally seek adventurous walking in more natural coastal or upland countryside**
- it is essential that the proposed Trail be marketed honestly and realistically, stressing its positive attributes** (e.g. its landscapes, birdlife, social history, built heritage, visitor attractions) **and the opportunities it offers to discover and enjoy the North West's coast, coastal villages and heritage, rather than being promoted solely as an end-to-end walking or cycling route**
- investment in, and development of, the proposed Trail offers scope to adopt a 'green corridor' approach** - not only enhancing the paths and associated infrastructure, but enhancing the wider Trail 'corridor' - for example, by removing eyesores, graffiti and litter, and undertaking tree planting and other landscape and environmental improvements
- the several existing promoted and other paths and cycle routes along the route of the Trail, and related information and other user services, provide a partial framework from which a continuous Coastal Trail may be developed**

- v. **significant gaps in the continuity of paths and cycle routes along the length of the proposed Trail, long detours up rivers and around estuaries, and the variability and shortfalls in the quality of path surfaces, visitor services, etc., will require to be tackled before the Trail can be widely promoted**
- w. **there are few safe, off-road riding routes along much of the proposed Trail**
- x. **train and bus services offer useful means whereby longer-distance and multi-day/day Trail users may travel to/from the Trail and offer opportunities to 'bypass' sections through more urban areas, around estuaries, etc.**
- y. **several national, regional and local trails feed in to the proposed Coastal Trail, offer options for long-distance circuits - for example, cycling from the North East by the C2C Cycle Route to the proposed Trail, cycling southwards on the Trail, and returning by the Trans Pennine Trail and NCN routes, or shorter walking, cycling and riding trips into the surrounding countryside**
- z. **there is strong national, regional and local demand for coastal visits, which include walking and cycling. Such users can contribute significantly to local economies - especially those on multi-day/longer-distance trips**
- aa. **user market segments with strongest potential for growth on the proposed Trail are likely to include those on leisure multi-day, day and part-day walking and cycling trips, activity walking or cycling holidays, club/group walking or cycling visits, educational visits (walking), or participants in events**
- bb. **all-abilities sections of the Trail can cater for less mobile and disabled users**
- cc. **there is potential for walking and cycling links to/from disadvantaged communities in the vicinity of the Trail and to promote its use by such communities.**

6.2 PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENTS

- 6.2.1 Based on the above findings and the more detailed assessments and discussions in previous sections, **the overall conclusion of this feasibility study is that there is substantial scope for the development and promotion of a North West Coast Discovery Trail from Chester to Carlisle.**

In particular, there is potential for the proposed Trail -

- iv. **to build on, and enhance, the existing framework of paths and cycle routes along the coast and linking to coastal towns and settlements**
- v. **to cater for a variety of walking, cycling and, to a lesser extent, riding markets, and for less mobile and disabled persons on all-abilities sections**
- vi. **to enable exploration, appreciation and enjoyment of the coastal landscapes, natural and cultural heritage and coastal settlements, by residents, day visitors and tourists**
- vii. **to bring a wide range of benefits to the North West, through its potential contributions to leisure, tourism, travel, economic growth, urban and rural regeneration, and community health and well-being - all of which may be achieved in sustainable ways - e.g. on foot or bicycle, travelling to/from the Trail by public transport.**

- 6.2.2 **These conclusions are based on the data readily available at the time, and within the timescale, of this brief feasibility study (i.e. late-December to end-February 2003). The consultant did not have the advantage of detailed data from which the costs of developing the proposed Trail, visitor numbers and economic benefits could be forecast. The Morecambe Bay Partnership's scoping report provides initial cost estimates, but does not fully explore route options and costs of land purchase, leases, etc..**

TRANS PENNINE TRAIL - Illustrative example of current practice

The **Trans Pennine Trail** (TPT) is a coast-to-coast trail from Liverpool to Hull, with extensions to Southport and Hornsea (344km, 213 miles), and links to Leeds, York, Sheffield and Chesterfield (total distance: 555km, 345 miles). It is part of the National Cycle Network and the E8 - European long distance walking route, which may eventually stretch from Ireland to Istanbul.

The TPT is a multi-user route for walkers and cyclists, with extensive sections available for riding and use by people with disabilities. It follows railway paths, canal towpaths, bridleways, footpaths, minor roads and cycle tracks, and passes through rural landscapes, towns and cities, including the Peak District National Park and Mersey and North Yorkshire Forests. A quarter of the U.K.s population live within 20 miles of the Trail.

The Trail has taken over 10 years to develop and was funded by the Millennium Commission, EU, development agencies, Countryside Agency, local authorities and United Utilities. Its development, management and marketing is coordinated by the **Trans Pennine Trail Officer** and an Assistant, based at Barnsley MBC - one of 26 partner local authorities with responsibilities for developing and maintaining sections of the Trail. A widely representative **Members' Steering Group** meets annually to discuss progress and an **Executive Group** of representatives of **5 area groups of authorities** involved in the Trail and the Friends of the Trans Pennine Trail meet more frequently and oversee the work of the Trail Officer. The voluntary **Friends of the Trans Pennine Trail** has some 300 subscription paying members, who support the Trail through lobbying, promotion, litter clearance, user surveys, etc. A voluntary Stewards scheme involves 70 local people as 'eyes and ears', who report any problems along the route (e.g. surface problems, vandalism).

Marketing of the Trail emphasises opportunities for local travel, exercise, dog waking, walking with children and coast-to-coast walking, and its roles as a 'green corridor' and haven for wildlife. Public transport links to/along the Trail are promoted. Marketing and information include -

- trail leaflets, a poster and 3 detailed maps on waterproof paper for sections of the Trail
- guide to accommodation, attractions, places to eat, stabling facilities, etc.
- Trail users' code - with advice for different types of user.

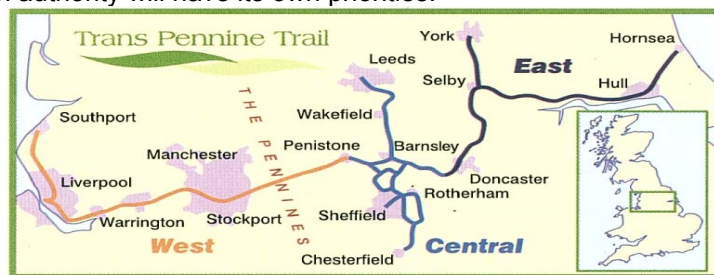
A full visitor survey is underway. Current data show -

- most users (98%) are day/part-day users and 50% use the Trail at least weekly
- 65% of users stated that the Trail has increased the amount of their regular exercise
- around 85% of users are satisfied with the signs, surfaces and condition of the Trail.

Elements of good practice include -

- **high quality, multi-user route** - for local and long-distance trips and sections suitable for people with physical disabilities and families
- **partnership of local authorities and involvement of wider interests**
- **dedicated staff** - as coordinators of Trail development, management and marketing
- **Friends Group and voluntary Stewards** - with the latter reporting any problems on the Trail
- **high quality marketing and information** - which adopts an honest approach, indicating that the Trail includes urban sections, but turning this into an asset
- **high levels of user satisfaction and impact of the Trail on users' levels of exercise.**

Experience with the TPT suggests that there are drawbacks to the 'loose' partnership of local authorities, as this can delay progress on developing the Trail and may pose issues for its longer-term management, as each authority will have its own priorities.



SOUTH WEST COAST PATH - illustrative example of current practice

The **South West Coast Path** (SWCP) is England's longest national trail - stretching from Minehead in Somerset, around the South West Peninsula, to Poole Harbour (1,014km, 630 miles). While mainly for walkers, 8% is available for cyclists or riders, include the Tarka Trail. The Path is renowned for the rugged coastline. 65% is in AONBs, 56% through Heritage Coasts and 5% in Exmoor National Park. Also, it passes interesting harbours and resorts and has important historical and archaeological features and literary and artistic associations.

The 1994 user survey estimated that the Coast Path attracted around 1m visitors/year, who spent around £15m in the local economy - supporting some 800 fte jobs. South West Tourism has suggested that current use is likely to be around 6-7m visits/year. 44% of holidaymakers have said the Coast Path is a main reason for their visit to the South West.

The **South West Coast Path Management Group** meets 4-times/year to oversee management of the Trail and comprises representatives of the Countryside Agency, 6 highway authorities, National Trust, NFU, Country Land & Business Association, South West Coast Path Association and South West Tourism. The **SWCP Project Steering Group** comprises technical officers, who oversee and coordinate the planning, management and marketing of the Path, with support of the **South West Coast Path Team** (3 officers and part-time administrative assistant). The Path Team provide expertise and coordinate the work of path managers employed by the local authorities, National Trust, etc.. Specific tasks led by the Team have included -

- preparation of a management strategy
- a GPS survey of the entire Path
- developing an integrated path management system for coordinating works and expenditures
- leading a £0.3m funding bid for path/path corridor improvements.

Annual management costs were £570k in 2002, of which £100k was spent on path improvements and £100k comprised the costs of the Paths Team.

The Coast Path is promoted through a leaflet, Website and guidebook. The latter is produced annually by the **South West Coast Path Association**, which meets annually, draws in wider interests and publishes a twice-a-year newsletter.

Elements of good practice include -

- **extensive, high quality coastal path 'product'**
- **partnership of local authorities and involvement of wider interests**
- **dedicated Trail staff**
- **management strategy and GPS audit** - which provide a strong framework for the coordinated management of the Path.

The management strategy includes, as priorities for future action, -

- appointment of a Coastal Path Sustainable Tourism Officer
- more involvement of businesses, schools and volunteers - including as voluntary wardens.

PART B. PROGRESSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COASTAL TRAIL

7. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR COASTAL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

7.1 REVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

7.1.1 This brief organisational review -

- illustrates the range of tasks likely to be involved in Trail development, management and marketing (s. 7.2)
- reviews current organisational arrangements and involvement (s. 7.3)
- identifies requirements and provides recommendations for future organisational arrangements for the proposed Coastal Trail (s. 7.4).

7.2 TASKS ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPING, MANAGING AND MARKETING THE PROPOSED TRAIL

7.2.1 Figure 7.1 illustrates the range of tasks associated with the initial development and on-going management and marketing of the proposed Coastal Trail and developing user markets.

Figure 7.1 Examples of Trail Development, Management and Marketing Tasks

Development Tasks	Trail Management	Trail Marketing & Market Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying/assessing route options - infrastructure planning, design, specifications & implementation (e.g. surfaces, bridges, signs) - Trail-related landscaping and environmental enhancement schemes - signing and interpretive strategy, designs & implementation - liaison with partner organisations, contractors, activity businesses, etc. - consulting communities, users, etc. - liaison/negotiation with landowners - planning applications/other approvals - preparing & submitting funding bids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring route condition & facilities - monitoring visitor use & satisfaction - organising/undertaking maintenance & up-grading of route, facilities, etc. - clearing litter, other wastes and managing vegetation - maintaining/up-dating signs, leaflets, mapboards, etc. - information & ranger services - on-going liaison and consultations - encouraging voluntary involvement - income generation & financial management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing & disseminating Trail information (e.g. leaflets, guides) - developing/maintaining Website - liaison with guide publishers, etc. - liaison with tourism & user organisations - promotional campaigns - working with activity holiday operators, transport companies, etc. to develop markets - health walks, events, etc. - public relations - media relations and publicity

7.3 CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR ROUTE DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

7.3.1 To be undertaken effectively, Trail development and management tasks (as illustrated above) need to be planned and progressed in a coordinated way. While a detailed appraisal of current management arrangements for the walking and cycling routes which may comprise sections of the Coastal Trail was not feasible, **it is evident that there is/are -**

- **a large number of organisations with roles and interests in paths and cycle routes along the North West's Coast;** for example -
 - national and regional agencies - e.g. CA, EA, GONW, HA, NWDA, NWRA
 - county, unitary, local and national park authorities - each of which may have different service departments/sections with interests in the Trail (e.g. countryside/environment, highways, tourism, economic development)
 - consultants/contractors (e.g. Capita's responsibilities for Cumbria Coastal Way)

- countryside, estuary and other management units and partnerships (e.g. Solway Coast AONB, Sefton Coast Partnership, Groundwork)

- tourist boards, partnerships (e.g. Lancashire Tourism Partnership) and operators
- urban and rural regeneration organisations (e.g. Cumbria Rural Regeneration Company, Mersey Partnership)
- paths, cycle route and related organisations (e.g. Sustrans, Ramblers' Association, British Horse Society)
- environmental organisations (e.g. RSPB, Friends of the Lake District)
- **inadequate coordination between, and within, organisations and gaps in awareness of each others' programmes** - this gives rise to uncoordinated cycle and walking route development and marketing, gaps between routes and inadequate maintenance
- **shortfalls in path maintenance and monitoring** - maintenance often results from complaints, rather than being scheduled and prioritised in accordance with regular condition surveys
- **inconsistencies in policies between organisations and areas** - e.g. cycling on promenades
- **inconsistencies and shortfalls in signing and marketing of paths**
- **lack of user information** - including data on user numbers, types and satisfaction
- **inadequate budgets and staffing** - to ensure adequate path conditions, maintenance, monitoring and ranger services.

7.4 REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE TRAIL MANAGEMENT

7.4.1 Experience from national and regional trails and coast and countryside management initiatives throughout the U.K. highlights key attributes which contribute to the effective management of such initiatives: namely -

- a. **clearly defined statement of aims and objectives**
- b. **agreed and appropriate status for the Trail**
- c. **strong identity for the Trail**
- d. **effective strategy and action programme**
- e. **commitment of key partner organisations**
- f. **partnership organisation** - to coordinate, lead and contribute to funding the development, management and marketing of the Trail
- g. **means of involving the wider range of interested parties**
- h. **Trail Officer and Trail Management Unit**
- i. **adequate funding and support** (see s. 8).

These attributes and how they may be developed are outlined briefly below.

a. Statement of aims and objectives (or mission statement) for the Trail

7.4.2 This statement will set out what the Trail concept is intended to achieve. ***It is recommended that a clearly-defined overall aim for the proposed North West Coastal Trail be agreed by the respective partner organisations. This should focus on the Trail -***

- ***encompassing all of the North West's coast - from Chester to Carlisle and connecting to other regional and national walking and cycling trails***
- ***offering opportunities for longer-distance, multi-day and day/part-day walking, cycling and, where feasible, riding and all abilities use, and with good public transport links to, and between sections of, the Trail***
- ***contributing to the amenities, health, sustainable travel opportunities and social and economic welfare of the North West's communities***

- **encouraging sustainable recreation, enjoyment and appreciation of the coast's landscapes, settlements and natural and cultural heritage by the North West's residents, day visitors and tourists**
- **benefiting from coordinated, effective and well-funded Trail development, management and marketing arrangements.**

b. Agreed and appropriate status for the Trail

- 7.4.3 The Countryside Agency advises Government on the designation of ***national trails***, and has indicated that its priorities are to bring existing national trails, and those being developed, up to a consistent standard and to maintain them at such a standard. The Agency is unlikely to support new national trails in the short- to medium-terms and urban sections of the proposed Trail are unlikely to meet the criteria for national trails. Against this context, ***it is recommended that regional trail is the most appropriate term to describe the status of the proposed Coastal Trail.***

Sections of cycle route, which may be included within the Trail, are already promoted as ***National Cycle Network (NCN) routes*** or ***NCN regional routes***. These terms are promoted by Sustrans and widely recognised, with most routes being signed according to their status and number. ***It is recommended that, insofar as appropriate, sections of the Trail which cater for cyclists should meet the standards of, and be promoted as, National Cycle Network regional routes.***

The term ***regional park*** is considered inappropriate to describe such an extensive linear recreational feature as the proposed Coastal Trail. Also, experience in Scotland and Northern Ireland shows that the use of 'park' in this context can give rise to opposition from landowners and farmers, who envisage area-wide public access, and this can create difficulties in negotiating new paths or path improvements. Nevertheless, ***the proposed Coastal Trail will provide a regionally significant recreational and park-type resource and important access to, and within, area-specific regional parks, such as are being investigated for the Ribble Estuary and Mersey Waterfront.***

c. Strong, descriptive identity for the Trail

- 7.4.4 Current terms used to identify the proposed Trail are the ***North West Coastal Trail*** and ***The Golden Thread***. The identity of the route is important in terms of the marketing 'messages' it conveys about the Trail 'product' and the scope it provides for marketing the Trail. Current national and regional ***coast paths*** (e.g. South West Coast Path, Pembrokeshire Coast Path) provide both a long-distance and multi-day walking product in often wild and 'natural' landscapes. Their marketing is targeted mainly at more experienced walkers and emphasises the 'walking experience'.

Evaluations of the proposed Coastal Trail suggest that, as a result of the many visitor centres and other interpretive displays presenting aspects of the North West's social history and natural heritage, this Trail offers more than solely a walking and cycling 'experience', and can attract wider user markets. Hence, ***it is recommended that the proposed Trail be developed as the North West Coast Discovery Trail. A shorter title, and an appropriate logo and 'strap-line', should be developed to convey and support this identity and for the marketing and signing of the Trail.***

d. Effective strategy and action programme for developing, managing and marketing the Trail

- 7.4.5 ***It is recommended that a development and management strategy be prepared for the proposed Trail, as a priority action.*** This should -
- set out key policies, programmes and actions, along with timing, responsibilities and cost estimates

- provide a strong framework for partner organisations' agreement on future intentions, actions and expenditures on the Trail over the next 10-years and for the coordination of partner organisations activities in support of the Trail
- provide a work programme for the proposed Trail Partnership and Trail Officer
- provide a bidding document for strategic and other funding for the Trail - e.g. NWDA, EU, Lottery, Landfill Tax and Aggregate Levy contributions.

e. Commitment of key partner organisations

7.4.6 The commitment of key partner organisations to playing their full potential roles in 'making the Trail work', through assisting and funding its development, longer-term management and marketing, will be vital. Of particular importance will be the involvement and support of the highways authorities, local authorities with delegated rights of way duties and countryside management functions, including the Lake District National Park Authority, and the regional tourist boards and NWDA. To secure and publicise their commitment to the development and longer-term support for the Trail, ***it is recommended that the principal Trail partner organisations be encouraged to 'sign up' to a Trail Partnership Agreement, which commits the partners to supporting the aims of the Trail and working to 'make it happen'***. Subsequently, this Agreement should be extended to include explicit support for the agreed Trail development and management strategy and action programme.

f. Partnership organisation to coordinate, lead and contribute to funding the development, management and marketing of the Trail

7.4.7 Figure 7.2 illustrates four options for an organisation to develop and manage the Trail and illustrates the format, strengths, weaknesses and possible outcomes of each; i.e.

-
- a. **existing body with project coordination responsibilities** - e.g. NWDA, Sustrans
- b. **informal arrangement** - an informal agreement between local authorities and other key players (e.g. NWDA, AONB Units, Sustrans) to progress the Trail through the independent actions of each partner, but with no corporate capabilities
- c. **partnership agreement** - based on a formal agreement between key partners and potentially with a Trail Management Unit working to the partnership. As a formally constituted partnership, it could directly employ staff, enter contracts, raise and hold funds, etc.. Also, it could apply for charitable status. Partner organisations' on-going core funding and support will be required. **Such a partnership could be established under the aegis of the North West Coastal Forum**, although the Forum itself would need to be more formally constituted.
- d. **company limited by guarantee (e.g. 'Trust')** - a quasi-independent organisation, with partner organisations as members and appointing Directors. The company could employ staff, enter contracts, raise and hold funds, etc. Partner organisations would require to provide on-going core funding and support. The company's remit and activities would relate directly to the Trail.

7.4.8 **It is essential that any organisation, which is to coordinate and lead the development, management and marketing of the proposed Trail -**

- **has sufficient autonomy to be able to 'get things done'** - without needing each partner agency's agreement and support for every action
- **works within a structure which is 'owned by', and accountable to, the key funding partners and wider interests**
- **is able to employ staff and enter contracts**

- **is capable of seeking external funding, hold funds and have the potential to apply for charitable status** - thereby, opening-up further funding possibilities and potential fiscal advantages.

Figure 7.2 Illustrative Options for Organisational Structure for Developing and Managing the Proposed Trail

Organisational Option	Examples (in other contexts)	Constitution and Powers	Potential Strengths (+) and Weaknesses (-)	Potential Outcomes
Single Body with Project Coordination Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustrans NWDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisation takes responsibility for coordinating implementation of Trail <i>ad hoc</i> liaison with other organisations or liaison group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + single minded team responsible for Trail + potential support from local organisations - other bodies (e.g. highway authorities) would retain statutory duties for rights of way, etc. - lack of wider 'ownership' & accountability - dependence on cooperation of l.a.s, etc., who are not be directly involved - not eligible for some strategic/other funds - reliance on continuing support from lead body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ unlikely for one organisation to take full responsibilities and maintain long-term interest ○ high risks of failure due to lack of wider 'ownership' and limited involvement ○ no 'grass routes' support ○ friction between lead body and other organisations
Informal Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NW Coastal Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> informal agreement no corporate body or powers no fund holding capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + joint approaches to Trail development, etc. + potential for wide range of partners - no corporate powers; reliant on partners for funds and implementation - limited/no ability to attract strategic funding - no ties; insecure - partners' commitment may evaporate - limited accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ low cost option ○ initial scope for broad partnership ○ high risks of failure - due to very limited capabilities ○ progress at pace of weakest/least committed partner ○ loss of commitment, support and credibility at best - may restructure as formal partnership or company

North West Coastal Trail - Concept Feasibility Study

<p>Partnership Agreement (+/- charitable status)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NW Coastal Forum (potential future status) Arnside & Silverdale AONB Unit Mersey Waterfront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> constitution & membership rules corporate body and powers unlimited liability of members potential for charitable status fiscal advantages of charitable status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + partnership dedicated to progressing Trail + joint approaches to Trail development, etc. + potential for corporate powers and capabilities + potential for wide range of partners, but retaining local authorities' 'ownership' - issues of members' potential liabilities - reliant on partners' funds and support - partners' interests may come before Trail - not eligible for some external funds - accountability depends on constitution/ethos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o medium cost option o potential for broad partnership & community support o risks of partnership not tackling bigger projects due to members' unlimited liabilities o may be viewed as public sector dominated body
<p>Not-for-Profit Company (limited by guarantee +/- charitable status)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustrans Groundwork Trusts proposed National Trails Trust Mersey Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> memorandum & articles of agreement corporate body and powers accountability through company legislation potential for charitable status members have limited liabilities fiscal advantages of charitable status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + organisation dedicated to progressing Trail + Directors have equal status + wide range of powers and capabilities + access to wide range of funds (esp. if charity) + dynamic of independent status + accountability thro' company/charitable status - risk of partners passing responsibilities to company and losing interest - dependent on partners' on-going support - expectations may exceed capabilities - need to ensure accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o potentially higher cost option o potential for broad partnership & community support o potential to achieve objectives, if adequate support o potential to give higher profile to Trail o scope to undertake wider range of initiatives

Note: corporate powers include ability to hold and manage funds, buy, lease and hold land, enter contracts and employ staff

The partnership agreement (option c.) and company limited by guarantee (option d.) options best meet the criteria set out above. In either case, the respective highways authorities will retain statutory responsibilities for public rights of way, but may delegate some responsibilities for management of the Coastal Trail to the proposed partnership along with an agreed annual budget and service agreement.

- 7.4.9 ***It is recommended that key partner organisations' agreement be sought to establishing a North West Coast Discovery Trail Partnership, comprising the respective local authorities, other key funding organisations*** (e.g. NWDA) and, possibly, organisations such as the coastal and estuary partnerships (e.g. Morecambe Bay Partnership, Sefton Coast Partnership). The partnership structure will enable the respective local authorities to retain 'ownership' of the Trail, while providing a corporate framework, which will enable the Partnership to undertake responsibilities and have such corporate powers as are identified in its constitution and membership rules. **This Partnership may be established under the aegis of the North West Coastal Forum**, although establishment of such a Partnership may require the Coastal Forum, itself, to be more formally constituted. The Chairperson of this Partnership will have a key role in encouraging progress by member organisations and as a 'champion' for the development of the Trail.

g. involving the wider range of interested parties

- 7.4.10 Given the wide range of organisations and groups with interests in the proposed Trail and the necessity of maintaining an open and accountable structure, ***it is recommended that the Trail Partnership establishes and supports a North West Coast Discovery Trail Liaison Group*** - which may meet 2- to 3-times a year and comprise representatives of public agencies, community and recreational user groups, landownership and management interests, tourism businesses, etc..

h. Trail Officer and Trail Management Unit

- 7.4.11 ***It is recommended that a Trail Officer and small Trail Management Unit be established to plan, lead, coordinate and facilitate the development, management and marketing of the Trail, service the Partnership and Liaison Group, and secure funding and other support for the Trail.*** The Trail Officer will be a 'champion' for the Trail and may be supported by -

- two Trail development officers - one for the southern section of the Trail and one for the north, with remits to coordinate and initiate the development and up-grading of the route and ancillary facilities
- Trail marketing, information and interpretive officer
- Trail fund-raiser - working part-time, or on a fixed contract to develop strategic funding bids and progress other fund-raising initiatives (e.g. sponsorships)
- administrative assistant.

These staff may be employed directly by the proposed Partnership, or may be seconded from a partner or other organisation (e.g. Business in the Community).

- 7.4.12 ***It is recommended that the North West Coastal Forum should investigate the potential for a key partner organisation to provide accommodation, administrative, financial and other services for the proposed Trail Management Unit*** - as part of the host organisation's support for the Partnership, or on a service contract basis.

PEMBROKESHIRE COAST PATH - illustrative example of current practice

Pembrokeshire Coast Path is one of Wales' three national trails. It was opened in 1970 and runs around the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, from Amroth, near Tenby, on the South Wales coast to near Cardigan in West Wales (300km, 186 miles). It is mostly a walking trail through rugged coastal scenery and sections of coast with no other access. Around 57km is on roads and it is intended to reduce this in the future. In addition to the National Park, the Coast Path passes through areas with European conservation designations (SPAs, SACs) and some 50 miles of SSSI.

In 1996/97, the Path attracted some 10,590 long distance users and 276, 735 short distance users, who spent over £12m in the local area. The survey showed high levels of satisfaction amongst users. Aspects such as the scenery, peace and quiet and exercise are amongst the main attractions of the Coast Path.

The **Pembrokeshire National Park Authority** manages the Coast Path, with support from the Countryside Council for Wales, which has statutory responsibilities for Wales' national trails. The Park Authority employs a **Coast Path Manager** (National Trail Officer), who liaises closely with the National Park's rangers and area warden teams, who undertake practical management work. Maintenance is undertaken, also, by the National Trust, and volunteers assist with practical work, condition surveys, guided walks, etc.. The Manager is responsible for strategic oversight and planning of the path, advising on improvement works, undertaking condition and risk assessments, monitoring use and providing information and interpretive advice for the website and leaflets. The **Pembrokeshire Coast Path Management Strategy** sets out the framework for path development and management. **Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park** undertake practical and other voluntary work relating to the Coast path and other aspects of the National Park.

Elements of good practice include -

- **high quality coastal path**
- **management strategy providing policy framework for Path management**
- **dedicated Coast Path Officer**
- **emphasis on safety and risk assessments** - partly in response to potential hazards of coastal erosion, etc..

There are limited opportunities for involvement of the communities and user groups in the management of the Coast Path, other than through the National Park's Friends group.

8. POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE NORTH WEST COASTAL TRAIL

8.1 REVIEW OF FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND POTENTIAL SOURCES

8.1.1 This brief review of potential funding requirements and sources is not comprehensive and focuses on -

- **capital funding requirements and potential sources** (s. 8.2)
- **revenue funding requirements and potential sources** (s. 8.3)
- **funding smaller-scale and community-based projects and programmes relating to the proposed Trail** (s. 8.4)

8.1.2 This review has drawn on information from publications and interviewees, but has not investigated the full range of potential funding sources, or funding organisations' priorities, budgets, conditions and possible responses to the proposed Trail. A detailed examination of funding was outside the scope of this study and, in many instances, funders will require more detailed proposals and indicative costs before providing considered responses.

8.2 CAPITAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND POTENTIAL SOURCES

8.2.1 Capital costs associated with developing the Trail are likely to include the costs of -

- **developing or up-grading component paths, cycle ways and riding routes** - especially where there are 'missing' sections, serious shortfalls in surfaces and structures, and where alternative routes are required to avoid hazardous roads
- **constructing or modifying bridges and other infrastructure** - particularly to avoid detours around estuaries and up rivers, to remove barriers to less mobile users (e.g. stiles, steps), or to enable the shared use of paths
- **providing information and amenities** - such as signing, interpretive/map-boards, cycle parking, picnic sites and shelters
- **acquiring land** - to enable Trail development and improvements
- **establishing a Trail management organisation** (section 7).

8.2.2 While funding will often be limited to areas of eligibility (e.g. EU Objective 1, 2 or 3 areas, AONBs, resort towns), some funding may be available at the regional scale. Potential strategic funding sources include -

- **EU funding** - for example, through the Merseyside **Objective 1** Programme 2000-2006 (e.g. Priority 1(b): Developing Niche Sectors: Measure 7: Arts, Culture and Tourism, projects associated with the Mersey Forest) until 2006 and the North West **Objective 2** Programme [e.g. rural tourism schemes in the Rural Cumbria Economic Development Zone (EDZ)]. Also, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire are eligible for **Objective 3** funding. The scope for EU Objectives 2 and 3 funding is likely to be limited and is set out in the Single Programming Document
- **Single Regeneration Budget** (SRB) - funding may be available, until 2007, through existing SRB schemes; for example, regeneration schemes for Maryport, Barrow-in-Furness, Fylde, Wyre, Sefton, Lancaster and Preston, and programmes managed by Cumbria Tourist Board and Lancashire Tourism Partnership
- **NWDA's Single Programme** - this is replacing a range of regional development schemes, including the SRB, and will support programmes being delivered through organisations such as Cumbria Rural Regeneration Company, Lancashire Rural Partnership and the Mersey Partnership. 'Flagship' programmes include the resort towns, market towns and regional parks programmes. The proposed

Coastal Trail will provide a regional park-type resource and, therefore, should fit within the NWDA's intended support for such initiatives

- **Sport England Lottery Fund** - these funds are managed by Sport England, but are limited due to lower Lottery receipts. Capital costs of projects based on natural resources in urban and rural areas may be eligible for funding support (e.g. Sports Lottery funding for the Pennine Bridleway)
- **Heritage Lottery Fund** - projects related to the Trail, which promote and enable physical and intellectual access (e.g. through interpretation) to areas of special heritage value, such as AONBs and nature reserves, may be eligible for HLF funding under Area Partnership Schemes (e.g. Mersey Waterfront Regional Park)

8.2.3 **Local authorities' funding** of the proposed Trail will be vital. This may be in the form of direct funding, match funding or other partnership funding for Trail-wide or more local projects. **Local transport plans, rights of way improvement plans, rural/ urban regeneration strategies and walking, cycling and tourism strategies** will provide important bidding documents for such funding.

8.2.4 **Other public agency funding for major capital projects relating to the Trail may include -**

- **Countryside Agency** - as part of joint NWDA and CA market towns schemes
- **DEFRA** - path schemes associated with coastal defence works
- **Environment Agency** - in respect of paths, bridges and other works to enhance the recreational use of riversides, estuaries and land in the Agency's ownership
- **Highways Agency** - for schemes associated with trunk roads and which enhance safety; for example, creating foot and cycle paths separate from trunk roads.

8.3 REVENUE FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND POTENTIAL SOURCES

8.3.1 Revenue funding will be required to support a range of cost elements, such as -

- **staff and organisational costs** - potentially including costs of a Trail coordinator, rangers, maintenance workers and accommodation, transport and equipment costs
- **Trail maintenance and small-scale improvements** - including the maintenance and up-grading of surfaces, structures, signs, etc. and clearance of litter or wastes
- **information and advisory services** - such as developing and maintaining a Trail Web-site, leaflets and mapboards.

8.3.2 Examples of the scale of running costs of national trails are illustrated in Figure 8.1

Figure 8.1 Examples of Running Costs of National Trails

National Trail	Length (kms)	Expenditures 2000/01	Average Cost/km 2000/01
Cleveland Way	176	£ 83,595	£ 475
North Downs Way	246	£ 96,762	£ 393
Offa's Dyke Path	288	£ 78,387	£ 272
Peddar's Way/Norfolk Coast Path	180	£ 91,392	£ 507
Pennine Way	412	£ 187,524	£ 455
South Downs Way	161	£ 115,333	£ 716
South West Coast Path	299	£ 808,307	£ 2,703
Thames Path/Ridgeway	425	£ 212,119	£ 499
Wolds Way	127	£ 42,356	£ 333
All National Trails in 2000/01	2,314	£ 1,715,775	£742
(minus SW Coast Path)	(2,015)	(£ 907,468)	(£ 450)

Source: Countryside Agency

Note: The SW Coast Path had major remedial works due to coastal erosion and improvements in 2000/01

The above examples illustrate the potential scale of running costs of the Coastal Trail - e.g. £450-750/km. However, there are significant differences between the proposed Trail and these national trails, which may result in lower costs for the latter –

- if cycling and riding provision is associated with the proposed Trail, then annual costs are likely to be higher than the national trails, which mostly cater for walking
- sections of the proposed Trail are likely to be on promenades, minor roads and other structures (e.g. coastal defences), which are maintained by highways or coastal defence authorities. Thus, some path costs may not be passed on to the Trail management organisations
- the Coastal Trail will be more easily accessible than remoter sections of national trails and this may result in cost savings.

Funding is often more readily available for capital works and longer-term commitments from public bodies towards revenue costs are usually more difficult to secure and maintain.

8.4 FUNDING SMALLER-SCALE AND COMMUNITY-BASED TRAIL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

8.4.1 Examples of area- or project-based funding schemes, which may support smaller-scale projects associated with the proposed Trail are identified in Figure 8.2. To be eligible for funding, schemes will usually need to demonstrate strong community support and/or be delivered through community bodies.

Figure 8.2 Potential Funding Sources for Smaller and/or Community-Based Elements of the Proposed Trail (examples; not comprehensive list)

Funding Programme	Funders	Projects Supported (examples)
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund	Countryside Agency, English Nature & English Heritage, DEFRA	environmental and access, recreation and interpretive projects in areas adversely affected by aggregates workings
AONB funding (Solway AONB, Arnside & Silverdale AONB)	Countryside Agency	access improvements, information, etc., where compatible with AONB objectives
Community Fund	Community Fund	initiatives by voluntary and community groups to assist communities overcome economic and social disadvantage
Countryside Stewardship	MAFF	payments to farmers/landowners for agreed access projects and management measures
Cycle Projects Fund	Dept. of Transport	schemes which promote and support cycling - e.g. cycle paths, parking and training
Forest Stewardship Scheme (successor to WGS)	Forestry Commission	access schemes in woodlands and community woodlands
Green Routes, Safe Routes	Sustrans (NOF)	sustainable transport projects, targeted at disadvantaged communities - e.g. Green Transport Corridors, Safe Routes to Stations and Safe Routes to School programmes
Landfill Tax Credit Scheme	Entrust registered bodies	environmental and sustainability projects within the vicinity of landfill sites
Parish Transport Grants	Countryside Agency	local schemes to promote walking and cycling and enable new leisure travel - e.g. cycle links to stations, access for all schemes
Rural Enterprise Scheme	MAFF	rural business support - e.g. establishment of cycle hire or walking tourism businesses
Walking the Way to Health Scheme	Countryside Agency, British Heart Foundation (NOF)	infrastructure, information, etc. associated with health walks

8.4.2 In addition to the above schemes, funding or other support may be available through -

- **charitable funds** - a range of charitable funds at the national, regional and local scales support projects to enhance recreational access, especially for less advantaged communities
- **sponsorship** - corporate organisations may support path development, signs, leaflets, etc. related to the Coastal Trail and associated projects (e.g. pub-to-pub trails, fitness trails, rail trails, Trail leaflets and mapboards)
- **support from volunteers** - for example, local authorities, Estuary Partnerships and Sustrans may organise voluntary ranger/warden schemes and ramblers, cyclists and riders groups may assist in path construction, maintenance and monitoring.

Also, specific sections of Trail or other facilities may be provided through **planning agreements**; whereby developers may agree to fund the development of facilities, as a goodwill contribution to the local community.

8.5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUNDING

8.5.1 **There are important 'windows of opportunity' for funding components of the proposed Coastal Trail**, including -

- a. EU and Lottery funding programmes
- b. regional and county rural recovery programmes
- c. coastal resorts, market towns and other urban regeneration programmes
- d. regional park programmes and proposals
- e. rights of way improvement programmes and local transport plans.

8.5.2 To capitalise on these funding opportunities, ***it is recommended that the Coastal Trail partner organisations should ensure that -***

- i. the Coastal Trail is included on the policy agendas and budgets of the respective partner and other funding agencies*** - at the earliest opportunity
- ii. key Trail partner organisations are encouraged to enter a North West Coastal Trail Partnership Agreement*** - whereby, for example, the respective local authorities and NWDA 'sign-up' to the principle of the Coastal Trail and a 10-year development and management programme
- iii. match funding and other partnership funding is available from partner organisations*** - to satisfy the requirements of strategic funding organisations and demonstrate partners' commitment to the Trail
- iv. a Funding Strategy be prepared for the North West Coastal Trail***, which identifies -
 - the likely scale of development and maintenance costs
 - key funding partners and the potential scale of their contributions
 - a programme for gaining partners' commitments to funding and progressing partnership-based funding bids
- v. a Coastal Trail Trust Fund be established*** - to support the costs of developing and maintaining the Trail in the longer-term. Where possible, income may include percentage contributions (e.g. 5-10%) of capital costs - set aside as endowments towards future maintenance, sponsorship funding and potential income (limited) from the sales of guidebooks and merchandise. Such a fund may prove valuable for coordinating partners' income and expenditures on the Trail and may have fiscal advantages (e.g. enabling funds to be carried over between financial years).

9. PROGRESSING THE PROPOSALS AND BUILDING SUPPORT FOR THE TRAIL

9.1 'MILESTONES' AND KEY TASKS FOR TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

9.1.1 The Coastal Trail Project Group has set out a preliminary programme for initial works aimed at achieving a launch of the proposed Trail. There has been slippage in the suggested timings and this study suggests that more substantial work is required to assess route options and development requirements, and to complete and bring sections of the Trail up to standard, before it is in a viable state to be launched as a promoted 'product'.

9.1.2 **It is recommended that, at the earliest opportunity, the North West Coastal Forum seeks the formation of an Interim Steering Group, comprising senior officers of the principal local authorities and regional agencies, to agree how best to progress the initial tasks and achieve the 'milestones' for developing and promoting the Trail - as set out in Figure 9.1.** These tasks and 'milestones' encompass the principal recommendations outlined in this report.

Figure 9.1 Key Milestones and Tasks Relating to Trail Development

Timing	Key Milestones	Principal Tasks
mid-2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Launch + Trail Seminar • Key Partners Sign-up to Trail Partnership Agreement • Early Action Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publish concept leaflet and summary document • undertake concept consultation programme + analysis • gain partners' support for preparation of development strategy • audits of - i. route and path options; ii. information/interpretation • preparation of Trail development strategy & action programme • initial Trail improvement programme • preparation of funding strategy • set up Trail Partnership and Liaison Group • appoint Trail Officer and staff
late-2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Development Strategy, Trail Partnership and Liaison Group • Trail Development Stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress strategic and other funding bids • Trail development and improvement programme • prepare Trail information, interpretation and marketing materials
mid-2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue Trail development and improvement programme • on-going Trail monitoring, management and marketing

9.2 GENERATING SUPPORT FOR THE TRAIL AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

9.2.1 Support for development of the Trail and its management and marketing will be essential to enable progress on developing the Trail, and for its success in attracting and satisfying Trail users. Support will be required from a range of potential partner organisations and other interest groups, including -

- elected/appointed members and senior staff of the North West Regional Assembly, local authorities and relevant national and regional agencies** - e.g. NWDA, Tourist Boards, Regional Sports Board, Countryside Agency
- potential implementation and management partners** - such as Sustrans, Groundwork and the Solway Coast and Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB Units
- community organisations** - especially in the more rural areas and settlements through which the Trail passes
- business organisations** - in particular, tourism and activity holiday businesses and other service providers (e.g. cycle hirers, transport operators)

- e. user and other interest groups** - for example, representatives of walkers, cyclists, riders and disabled users, and countryside and conservation organisations.

Means of targeting these groups will often overlap.

9.2.2 It is recommended that the principal means of generating support for the Trail, its development and on-going management should include -

- i. involving key decision-makers and potential support and user organisations in Trail development and management through membership of -**
 - **North West Coast Discovery Trail Partnership** (s. 7.4.9)
 - **North West Coast Discovery Trail Liaison Group** (s. 7.4.11)
- ii. establishing an open membership North West Coast Discovery Trail Friends Group** - or similar support group, which may have a subscription membership and be open to the general public; particularly those interested in supporting the Trail in a voluntary capacity
- iii. establishing a network of Trail ‘champions’** - i.e. key decision-makers in public bodies and businesses, influential representatives of communities and interest groups, and regional media personalities, who are prepared to use their offices and influence to promote the Trail and its development
- iv. high profile events, with media coverage** - for example -
 - **launch events** (Figure 8.1) - including presentations and information packs for participants and the media
 - **bi-/annual Trail Conference** - with progress reports, good practice presentations, contributions by outdoor writers, etc.
 - **stunts** - e.g. vintage bicycle and ramblers’ trip on section of Trail, schools’ pass-the-baton walk/ride from Chester to Carlisle, marathon run
- v. ‘key stage’ information leaflets** - to coincide with the stages outlined above -
 - **Trail concept leaflet**
 - **Trail development proposals leaflet**
 - **Trail guidebook and users’ map/leaflet**
- vi. partners’ and interest groups’ communication programme**
 - **Trail newsletter** - quarterly or half-yearly, for postal or e-mail circulation to partner and community organisations, selected businesses, user groups, etc.
 - **Website** - with news of progress on the Trail and key events
- vii. schools’ involvement programme** - for example -
 - **Trail logo and poster design competition**
 - **Trail-related educational projects**
- viii. community and users’ involvement programme** -
 - **appointment of voluntary wardens**
 - **voluntary pathworks days for user groups**
 - **guided walks and cycle rides.**

Appendix A.

KEY CONTACTS

Representatives of a wide range of organisations and interests provided useful information and advice during the preparation of this report. Many of the key contacts are listed below. Importantly, the list does not include the respondents to the postal questionnaire survey of representatives of selected user groups. The consultant acknowledges, with gratitude, the assistance of all who assisted this study.

Arnside & Silverdale AONB	R. Lord
British Horse Society	D. Carus (N. W. Dev. Officer)
Byways and Bridleways Trust	A. Kind
Capita DBS	R. Singleton
Carlisle City Council	M. Hudson
Cheshire County Council	A. Bowring, A. Geroni, G. Broughton, J. Wainright
Countryside Agency	B. Cutts
Cumbria Bridleways Society	K. Croker
Cumbria County Council	K. Blenkharn
Cumbria Tourist Board	G. Kennedy, H. Tate
Cycle Project for North West	M. Lenton
Environment Agency	J. Barrett
European Ramblers Assoc.	A. Howcroft
Friends of the Lake District	I. Brodie
Gillespies (Ribble Reg. Park Study)	A. Fisher
Govt. Office for the North West	C. Bamber
Groundwork Macclesfield & Vale Royal	J. Poole
Groundwork West Cumbria	R. Naylor
Lake District National Park Authority	M. Guyatt
Lancashire County Council	J. Lynch, N. Osborne, A. Simpson
Mersey Partnership; Mersey Waterfront Regional Park	L. Hopkins, P. Wilshire
Morecambe Bay Partnership	S. Bleakley
North West Development Agency	J. Litt, P. Chase, P. Ready, I. Wray
Ramblers' Assoc.	T. Rogers (+ groups listed below)
Regional Sports Board for the North West	P. Cooke
RSPB; N. W. Coastal Forum	L. Rose
Scottish Natural Heritage	M. Scott
Sefton M.B.C.	V. Hough, C. Jones
Solway AONB	B. Irving, R. Wolfe
Solway Partnership	R. Jennings
South Lakeland District Council	A. McNeill
Sport England - North West Region	C. Dodds
Sustrans	P. Foster, A. Cope, B. Dowson
Trans Pennine Trail	L. Owens
Wirral M.B.C.	J. Entwistle, A. Watson, M. Jamieson

Appendix B

RESPONSES TO SURVEY OF POTENTIAL USER GROUPS

Introduction

As part of the feasibility study, the consultant sent a brief postal questionnaire to selected regional and sub-regional representatives of the Ramblers' Association, Cyclists Touring Club and Long Distance Walkers' Association. Also, the British Horse Society's Development Officer for the North West forwarded questionnaires to representatives of riding interests and a questionnaire was sent to a representative of the European Ramblers' Association and a regional representative of the Byways and Bridleways Trust.

The survey was not intended to provide a statistically valid, or fully representative, range of views of possible Trail users, but to provide initial fee-back from those representing potential longer-distance users. Also, the groups which were asked their opinions were those most likely to have some knowledge of all, or several sections of, the route (as opposed to local communities, or casual walkers in specific areas).

The results of this survey are no more than indicative of the potential response to the route by committed walkers, cyclists and riders, who are likely to be interested in longer-distance, day or multi-day trips. It does not represent the potential response of casual walkers, cyclists and riders, those who may use the Trail for journeys to work, etc., and those who may use it while on holiday. A more detailed and statistically valid survey was outwith the scope of this study.

Responses and Acknowledgements

Ten days after the end date for responses (i.e. end of January), responses had been received from **26 respondents/groups** (hereafter referred to as *respondents*). These included -

- 14 responses from Ramblers' Association footpath officers or group secretaries and a representative of the European Ramblers' Association
- 3 responses from representatives of the Long Distance Walkers' Association
- 5 responses from representatives of the Cyclists Touring Club
- 1 response from a representative of the Byways and Bridleways Trust (response analysed with walkers' responses)
- 3 responses from two bridleway societies and a branch of the British Horse Society.

The views and information from these respondents are grateful acknowledged. In particular, the Merseyside & West Cheshire Area Footpath Secretary of the Ramblers' Association voluntarily copied the questionnaire to 6 groups and collated the responses.

Analysis of the Responses

This analysis summarises and tabulates the responses. Many responses had a wealth of comments and only a sample of these comments can be presented in this brief Appendix, but every effort has been taken to ensure that the key 'messages' are included. The comments have not been prioritised and some may be conflicting, as a result of this 'neutral' summarising of the results of the survey. The survey information has contributed to the consultant's analysis of the feasibility of, and recommendations for, the proposed Trail.

The analysis averages the responses by representatives of each user group to the qualitative information (e.g. grading from *very likely* to *very unlikely* the responses to *Would you/others be likely to use the whole Trail for: long distance walk/cycle/ride from end-to-end; multi-/single day trips from home*) and provides a sample of comments to specific open-

ended questions (e.g. *Please comment on the main positive negative aspects of the route from your/others' points of view: A. Solway-Barrow: - positive aspects; - negative aspects ...*, etc.).

Summary of Responses

1. Views on the route as a whole	<div> <div>very likely</div> <div>←</div> <div>→</div> <div>very unlikely</div> </div> <div>5 4 3 2 1</div>				
a. likelihood of long-distance use end-to-end					
- walkers' responses (%, 17 responses)	29%	12%	12%	12%	35%
- cyclists' responses (%, 5 responses)	20%	20%	20%	40%	-
- riders' responses (%, 3 responses)	-	67%	33%	-	-
- all responses (%, 25 responses)	20%	20%	16%	12%	32%
b. likelihood of use for multi-/single day trips					
- walkers' responses (%, 18 responses) 6%	67%		17%	11%	-
- cyclists' responses (%, 5 responses)	-	20%	20%	40%	20%
- riders' responses (%, 3 responses)	-	33%	67%	-	-
- all responses (%, 26 responses)	46%	19%	19%	8%	8%
c. Which sections are likely to be of <u>most</u> attractiveness to you/others (respondents could list more than one section)	A. Solway to Barrow	B. Morecambe Bay	C. Morecambe to Preston	D. Preston to Liverpool	E. Wirral
- walkers' responses (%, 16 responses) 50%	75%		63%	31%	9%
- cyclists' responses (%, 4 responses)	75%	100%	25%	50%	-
- riders' responses (%, 3 responses) 33%	100%	67%	33%	33%	
- all responses (%, 23 responses)	78%	70%	30%	26%	39%
d. Which sections are likely to be of <u>least</u> attractiveness to you/others (respondents could list more than one section)	A. Solway to Barrow	B. Morecambe Bay	C. Morecambe to Preston	D. Preston to Liverpool	E. Wirral
- walkers' responses (%, 11 responses) 55%	18%		18%	73%	45%
- cyclists' responses (%, 4 responses) 100%	-		-	50%	25%
- riders' responses (%, 2 responses) 67%	-	-	33%		33%
- all responses (%, 17 responses)	12%	12%	65%	41%	71%
2. Comparisons with Other Trails	<div> <div>very favourably</div> <div>5 4 3 ← 2 → 1</div> <div>very unfavourably</div> </div>				
a. South West Peninsula Coast Path					
- walkers' responses (%, 15 responses)	20%	13%	27%	27%	13%
- cyclists' responses (%, 3 responses)	-	-	-	33%	67%
- riders' responses (%, 1 responses)	100%	-	-	-	-
- all responses (%, 19 responses)	21%	11%	21%	26%	21%

b. Pembrokeshire Coast Path	5	4	3	2	1
- walkers' responses (%, 16 responses)	13%	25%	37%	25%	-
- cyclists' responses (%, 4 responses)	-	-	-	50%	50%
- riders' responses (%, 1 responses)	100%	-	-	-	-
all responses (%, 21 responses)	14%	19%	29%	29%	10%
c. Cleveland Way	5	4	3	2	1
- walkers' responses (%, 15 responses)	13%	27%	47%	27%	-
- cyclists' responses (%, 3 responses)	-	-	-	33%	67%
- riders' responses (%, 1 responses)	100%	-	-	-	-
all responses (%, 19 responses)	16%	21%	37%	16%	11%
d. Pennine Way	5	4	3	2	1
- walkers' responses (%, 18 responses)	11%	28%	50%	11%	-
- cyclists' responses (%, 3 responses)	-	-	-	-	100%
- riders' responses (%, 1 responses)	100%	-	-	-	-
all responses (%, 22 responses)	9%	27%	41%	9%	14%
e. Pennine Bridleway	5	4	3	2	1
- walkers' responses (%, 12 responses)	25%	8%	50%	8%	8%
- cyclists' responses (%, 4 responses)	-	-	25%	-	75%
- riders' responses (%, 3 responses)	-	100%	-	-	-
all responses (%, 22 responses)	16%	21%	37%	5%	21%
f. C2C Cycle Route	5	4	3	2	1
- walkers' responses (%, 8 responses)	37%	25%	12%	25%	-
- cyclists' responses (%, 5 responses)	-	20%	20%	-	60%
- riders' responses (%, 3 responses)	-	33%	33%	33%	-
all responses (%, 16 responses)	19%	25%	19%	19%	19%

Additional Comments:

cyclists: - **proposed route compares very unfavourably with other established cycle routes except Solway-Barrow and with other walking routes**

3. Favoured Route and Link Routes - respondents were asked to indicate alternative alignments for the proposed Trail and important link routes on a map (supplied)

In general, respondents did not find maps sufficiently detailed to comment on alignments, but offered to mark lines on more detailed maps.

4. Information on the Trail	most likely to use					least likely to use				
(all respondents)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
a. published map/leaflet (25 responses)	80%	8%	12%	-	-	80%	8%	12%	-	-
b. Trail guidebook (23 responses)	39%	35%	17%	4%	4%	39%	35%	17%	4%	4%
c. Website information (23 responses)	26%	26%	13%	17%	17%	26%	26%	13%	17%	17%
d. OS Map (26 responses)	85%	12%	4%	-	-	85%	12%	4%	-	-

Additional Comments:

- a walkers: - **each and all if available**
- **provide accommodation list, YHAs**
 - **guided walks by Ramblers Groups and others**
 - **information boards *in situ***
 - **interpretive boards**

- **publicity through local TICs**
- b. cyclists: - **no more signposts please**
- c. riders: - **information through specific society - e.g. BHS**
- **include mileage from village to village, include vets, farriers, B&Bs (every 15-20 miles for horses)**
- **B&Bs with grazing for horses**

5. Involvement in Trail Management (all respondents)	very likely 5	4	3	2	very unlikely 1
a. represent users' views in planning/management of Trail (26 responses)	54%	8%	15%	4%	19%
b. assist in Trail maintenance (24 responses)	8%	8%	25%	21%	38%
c. act as voluntary wardens/rangers (26 responses)	8%	4%	27%	23%	38%

6. Evaluations of Potential of Trail unlikely (all respondents)	very likely 5	4	3	2	very 1
a. important new amenity for NW residents?(24 responses)	50%	29%	17%	4%	
-					
b. important new utilitarian route? (24 responses)	17%	25%	25%	4%	
(e.g. for trips to work, shops, etc.)					
c. attract more activity tourists to NW? (24 responses)	42%	33%	8%	12%	
4%					

Additional Comments:

cyclists: - day routes more likely to attract visitors

7. Other Comments (summarised)

- a walkers:** - a lot of route already there - people crying out for more paths away from traffic
- Cumbria Coastal Way has existed for long time. Sections well used for recreational walking. CCW Steering Group has identified gaps and sections for a true coastal route (e.g. Lancashire/ Cumbria border to Arnside, route around Duddon Estuary) - progress is very slow. Hoped that North West Coastal Trail project provides impetus and money for I.a.s to tackle these problems
 - Cumbria LDWA agrees there is potential need for a LDP/cycleway and this would attract walkers and cyclists, but not sure how popular this would be and that it could attract same attention as Pennine Way or Coast to Coast Path. If route through urban areas is safe, it may attract local walkers and cyclists. Most use is likely to be by End to End and Round the Coast walkers and cyclists
 - route is described in Ian & Krysia Brodie's 'The Cumbria Coastal Way'
 - section from Glasson Dock to Morecambe is very busy with walkers, cyclists and children
 - section near Arnside needs to be sorted out and put along coast; finalising part of Cumbria Coastal Way through Arnside/Silverdale AONB is being undertaken by S. Lakeland DC
 - missing sections along coast - Lancaster area
 - viaducts over Leven and Kent estuaries may be single-tracked - possibility of pedestrian use
 - Lake District area of RA and constituent groups fully support proposal - would like a more continuous coast path around UK
 - Dumfries and Galloway Council is keen to pursue Cumbria Coastal Way into their area
 - Trail may appeal to 'western' Europeans who come here in numbers to walk - esp. Danes and Dutch - they walk Pennine Way and Coast to Coast - often with commercial operators, who may see potential in new Trail
 - German walking organisations may be interested - even in urban and industrial sections as 'Wandern' has strong element of 'Kultur' (i.e. heritage, nature, places of historical significance)

- French walking organisations also interested in national heritage
- European Ramblers Assoc. always welcomes new trails - especially if part of E-path network. When Trans-Pennine Trail (E-8) was being developed, there was talk of extension into Wales, this proposed trail may be beginning of such a link
- from RA's walking perspective route from Chester along West Wirral coast needs to be actively established - Wirral Way (former Heston-West Kirby railway line) should be linked to Trail
- Much of the route is in need of improvements, which could reduce friction between different users, increase use and enable more people to enjoy the facility - especially the Wirral section
- NW Coastal Path is an artificial concept compared to say Coast to Coast Path. There is much competition between long distance paths to extent that usage is debatable; particularly as southern part is through urban areas
- Issues requiring to be resolved on Freckleton-Preston-Banks sections:
 - o Freckleton - Preston - a desert for public footpaths and two SSSIs will need screening
 - o reopen former public footpath Lea No. 27 Preston Docks to Savick Bridge
 - o no access from Grange Lane, Longton to the Estuary
 - o need for footpath over River Douglas in Hesketh Bank area - very expensive (use former waterpipe bridge?)
 - o access required over Hundred End Gutter to remove long detour
 - o seasonal access desired to Hesketh Marsh embankment.
- need to take account of conservation and farming interests, but more river banks and embankments could be made available for walking
- need to explain to public how to behave in countryside
- need to have all rights of way in good condition and information on changes to rights of way
- no doubt that coastal walking is attractive and NW has some very good sections of coast
- on some sections, new paths will be required which will involve months/years of hard work.

b. cyclists: - day routes more likely to attract visitors

- not much benefit for cyclists - coastal routes tend to be windy, boring and often hilly
- individual sections may fit local needs and some established sections need to be improved
- distinguish between needs of mountain bikers - who do only short rides in daylight with minimal loads on any surface; long-distance tourers - with full panniers, who need good surfaces; local one-day leisure/utility cyclists who need reasonably smooth, all-weather surface. On-road sports cyclists would not be interested
- I would not find Lancashire coast the most attractive to walk as a complete entity. Short walks for locals and visitors are another matter. Rough faint trails are more attractive to walkers giving more of a wilderness experience. Ideally, cyclists would have a roughly parallel route out of sight of walkers
- an extravagant mistake. No one in CTC I have spoken to can develop much enthusiasm for overall concept as a long-distance cycling trail. Hate to see money switched from meagre cycling budgets, when l.a.s have greater priorities in streets outside our houses. Good idea to show almost-separate coastal cycle route on maps using local roads and in part sharing walkers' trail
- certain sections have appeal - e.g. foot/cycle bridge over River Douglas and up-grading promenades and tracks in urban areas
- by 'Trail' do you mean path/bridleway? If on roads, avoid busy A roads (e.g. Morecambe - Carnforth - canal alternative)
- avoid A590 - too busy; Southport- Preston needs alternative as main roads very busy
- if intended for walkers/off-road cycling, Lancaster CTC is not most likely source of feed-back
- Cumbria and Lancaster Cycle Routes have been in vogue for 15 years - data from authorities
- serious traffic issues: Arnside - Grange, via Levens Bridge; Furness Peninsula; Broughton in Furness - Ravenglass
- need to integrate with other initiatives (e.g. Hadrian's Cycleway, Furness Greenways)
- with choice available to cyclists and most new recreational cyclists not having slightest intention of doing more than day rides, this route does not rank anywhere near a priority

- day circular routes are the most popular. Little demand for linear routes as return by rail is gamble + often a limit of 2 bikes
- doubtful if route will go into town centres/employment centres; therefore, of very limited value for travel to work, school, etc.
- people very seldom see walkers on West Cumbria coast - doubt if it will do much for economy. Many more attractive alternatives for walking/cycling

c. riders: - increased number of cars on roads of great concern to riders

- a great idea - any possibility of avoiding built-up areas, which are not suitable for riding
- will provide local hacking routes
- will provide diverse, scenic and very useful multi-user trail - useful for adventurous long distance users and short day/weekend routes
- provide access from conurbations to coast and countryside
- many new rights of way will need to be created
- coastal strip has industrial/residential development and is inaccessible due to topography
- Morecambe Bay estuaries need guide
- need to find horse friendly accommodation
- wherever possible, Trail should be of bridleway status to cater for everyone (best value) - often opposition to multi-use due to perceived conflicts; yet, no-one complains of other users on established multi-use trails
- B& B for horses is a growing market and people always looking for new long distance trails with little road work

A. Solway to Barrow

Walkers' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wonderful coastline; coastline and scenery: esp. Millom-St. Bee's; Maryport-Solway less built up good and varied coastal scenery; St. Bee's Head historic interest including numerous Roman sites and Hadrian's Wall natural history sites and nature reserves; birds attractive recreational areas Cumbria Coastal Way is extant + monitored by I.a.s and Ramblers Assoc. not much used - attractive to walkers looking for less frequented areas opportunities for day/longer walks places of interest - Silloth, Whitehaven, Maryport, Ravenglass good for short walking breaks/holidays
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fewer public transport access points getting there; too far for day trips a few industrial sites - Sellafield, Whitehaven, Workington, Barrow Maryport-St. Bees through industrial area Cumbria Way has some unsatisfactory sections of footpath Cumbria Coastal Way from Greenodd to Ulverston on verge of A590 - busy trunk road - very unsatisfactory path has tendency to be washed away nuclear submarines
Cyclists' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attractive coast and sea views; good views esp. Arnside easy cycling/walking beaches accessible connects to C2C and Reivers routes alternative minor roads OK for cycling trains access via 12 stations 6 bird sanctuaries on coast need to avoid busy main roads
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coast beauty spoiled by industrial areas - Millom, Haverigg Prison, Sellafield, Whitehaven, Workington, Silloth, Barrow
Riders' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quiet area for riding; quiet lanes tourist areas for B&Bs rides into Lake District having a guidebook (+ B&Bs for horses) along beautiful coastline would be wonderful - also links with other recreational pathways
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some coast not available for riding busy coastal road rail line adjacent to coast may not be enough 'off road' for riding

Note: Byways and Bridleways Trust's representative opinions are recorded with walkers' opinions

B. Morecambe Bay

Walkers' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • historical aspects • enormous tidal bay - Cross Sands route available with Queens Guide • peacefully rural + Arnsdale/Silverdale AONB • places of interest Holker Hall, Levens Hall, Cartmel Priory • good transport system - trains • close to lakes • plenty of accommodation opportunities • attractive to walker/naturalists • good walking • opportunities for day/longer walks • good for short walking breaks/ holidays
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holiday town of Morecambe not to everyone's taste • missing link on Lancashire/Cumbria border to Arnsdale • crossing the sands • too far for day trips • expensive shops
Cyclists' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attractive, varied coastline • birdlife on sand-flats • train access via 6 stations • accessible
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morecambe A5105 towards Bolton le Sands - urban spread • A590 unavoidable - Heversham North and west to Lindale; A590 should be avoided too bus • bit into Morecambe is not nice - on road • more industrial and urban areas that A - less attractive for walkers
Riders' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quiet area for riding; some quiet lanes • wonderful area • good riding on sections of beach • Morecambe Promenade to Heysham available • N. Lancs. Bridleways Soc. negotiating local trails • Morecambe to Carnforth seems to be on main roads - there are alternatives
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several estuaries with main roads and lowest bridge 3 miles up-river • dangerous quick-sands - Morecambe Bay • a bit busy for riding on roads

Note: Byways and Bridleways Trust's representative opinions are recorded with walkers' opinions

C. Morecambe to Preston (questionnaire missed this section; many respondents provided response)

Walkers' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would not find Lancashire Coast the most attractive to walk as a complete entity; short walks are different • more industrial and urban areas that A - less attractive for walkers • seaside resorts a definite negative • built up area - concrete paths • long deviation around River Wyre •
Cyclists' Opinions	
positive aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • Bridge over R. Douglas would be very worthwhile
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • nothing will induce me to cycle into Blackpool
Riders' Opinions	
positive aspects:	
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a bit busy for riding on roads

Note: Byways and Bridleways Trust's representative opinions are recorded with walkers' opinions

D. Preston to Liverpool

Walkers' Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too built up • not known • only attractive in parts • reasonable accessibility; good public transport - Merseyrail • day walk opportunities for large population • Southport, Preston and Liverpool - lots to offer • still get views • sand dunes, flowers, wildlife, squirrels
positive aspects:	
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more industrial and urban areas than A - less attractive for walkers • needs best possible route around industrial and dockland sections • coast is not particularly attractive • built up area - concrete paths; urban area around Bootle/Crosby and Preston • litter - too many cars • would only use north of Crosby • suspect route between Preston and Southport very muddy
Cyclists' Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • be good if alternative to busy roads found for cyclists
positive aspects:	
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • Southport-Preston needs thought - main roads too busy; alternatives away from coast
Riders' Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • Southport/Formby great beach areas
positive aspects:	
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too busy for riding on roads • Liverpool Docklands

Note: Byways and Bridleways Trust's representative opinions are recorded with walkers' opinions

E. Wirral

Walkers' Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • attractive coast; interesting area • riverside + open sea • wildlife; good for walker/naturalists • good accommodation • good public transport • day walk opportunities for large population • needs best possible route around industrial parts of Birkenhead and docks • multi-use path in existence • route could start at Woodside Ferry Terminal • good country parks
positive aspects:	
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not always easy to reach • built up area - concrete paths • litter • path washed away by red rocks • public toilets are to be closed on Merseyside section of Wirral section
Cyclists' Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • large portion already cycle-able
positive aspects:	
negative aspects:	
Riders' Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not known • could provide somewhere for locals to ride
positive aspects:	
negative aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too busy for riding • built up- as regards riding on holiday • Mersey crossing might cause problems

Note: Byways and Bridleways Trust's representative opinions are recorded with walkers' opinions

SUMMARY EVALUATION OF RESPONSES TO USERS' SURVEY

In evaluating the responses, it must be re-emphasised that the survey involved only a few respondents representing more 'committed' and often longer than average distance walkers, cyclists (mainly on-road cyclists) and riders. Their views do not necessarily represent the views of more casual and less committed users, who may walk, cycle or ride less frequently, or mainly at weekends, on holiday, etc., including families and the elderly. The results of the survey are summarised below -

Potential Use of the Route

a. Long-distance, end-to-end use of the route

Walkers, cyclists and riders may use the route from end-to-end :

- **of all respondents, 40% are very likely (20%) or likely (20%), and 44% are unlikely (12%) or very unlikely (32% - walkers only) to use the route end-to-end**
- 41% of the walkers are very likely or likely to walk end-to-end, but 47% are unlikely or very unlikely (35%) to do so
- 40% of cyclists are very likely or likely, and 40% are unlikely, to cycle end-to-end
- two of the three riders are likely to use the route end-to-end.

b. Multi-/single day trips on the route

Walkers are the most likely users of the route for multi-/single day trips, although there is some interest by cyclists and riders

- three-quarters (74%) of the walkers are very likely (67%) or likely (17%) to use the route for multi-/single day trips
- only 20% of the cyclists are likely to use the route for such trips and 60% are unlikely (40%) or very unlikely (20%)
- riders are less certain. One of the three respondents is likely to make multi-single day trips - although all three want the route to be available for riders

The low/mixed levels of interest by cyclists and riders is partly attributable to the cycling respondents being largely interested in on-road cycling and viewing the route as having limited interest and being exposed to the elements, and a general dislike by all respondents (especially riders) of the urban sections of the route.

Sections of the Route of Most/Least Attractiveness to Potential Users

- **the Solway to Barrow section is considered the most attractive by most respondents (78%) (75% of walkers; 75% of cyclists, 100% of riders)**
- **the Morecambe Bay section is also highly considered by users (70%) (63% of walkers, 100% of cyclists and 67% of riders)**
- **50% of the cyclists consider the Preston to Liverpool section attractive for cycling and 50% of the walkers consider the Wirral section attractive for walking**
- **least attractive sections are Morecambe to Preston (65% of respondents), Preston to Liverpool (41%) and Wirral (71%). The Wirral section is the least attractive section for cycling (100%).**

Comparisons with Other Long-Distance Routes (South West Coast Path, Pembrokeshire Coast Path, Cleveland Way, Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway & C2C Cycle Route)

- **walkers' views are mixed; one or two consider it compares very favourably with some of the other examples (especially C2C and Pennine Way)**

- cyclists did not know some of the other routes, or did not comment. **Generally, the cyclists consider that the route does not compare favourably with the other routes**
- **the riders think the route compares favourably with the other routes.**

Information on the Trail

- **users are likely to use all of the suggested forms of information** (e.g. published map/leaflet, OS map, guidebook, Website)
- **they prefer a published map/leaflet (most likely to use: 80%; likely to use: 8%) or OS map (85%; 12%),** to a guidebook (39%; 35%) or Website (26%; 26%).

Other suggestions included the provision of information on -

- accommodation and services lists, including hostels, horse B&Bs, vets and farriers
- guided walks (e.g. by Ramblers' groups)
- information and interpretive boards
- signposts with mileage from village to village.

Involvement in Trail Management

As representatives of formal groups, the respondents represent those most likely to participate in Trail management, although some indicated that existing responsibilities rule out such involvement.

- **62% of respondents are very likely (54%) or likely (8%) to be prepared to represent similar users' views in Trail planning and management**
- **only 16% are very likely (8%) or likely (8%) to actively assist in Trail maintenance**
- **only 12% are very likely (8%) or likely (4%) to be prepared to become voluntary Trail wardens/rangers.**

Potential Benefits of the Trail

- **79% of respondents think the Trail may provide an important new amenity for residents of the North West**
- **42% think it could provide an important new route for trips to works, school, etc., but 33% disagreed**
- **75% think it may attract more activity tourists to the North West.**

Main Themes from Users' Comments (see detailed comments above)

a. walkers' representatives

- support in principle for coastal path
- uncertainties over potential popularity; most likely to attract some all-route walkers and local walkers, also some European visitors
- need to resolve gaps in route and long detours, and improve sections in poor states of repair (e.g. parts of Cumbrian Coast, Wirral)
- urban areas are less attractive, but may attract local walkers
- many places and features of interest on route

b. cyclists' representatives

- not of great benefit to cyclists - issues of best value (better to invest in local routes)
- unlikely to attract use for trips to work, shops, etc.
- need to avoid main roads (esp. A590, Levens Bridge, Southport-Preston)
- different cycling markets have different needs (e.g. on-road, off-road, cycleways)
- coastal cycling is too exposed and boring

- cycle carriage on trains is restricted
- many places and features of interest on route

c. horse riders' representatives

- support in principle, but lack of routes
- priority should be given to local routes
- traffic hazards and urban areas are not suitable for riding
- need to ensure horse accommodation and services for riders
- issues of perceived inter-user conflicts on multi-use routes
- attractive beaches and other areas for riding.

